SIX PLAYS

by

RACHEL LYMAN FIELD

Library of the
University of North Carolina

Endowed by the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies

EXTENSION DIVISION
Community Drama
Cop 1

Susan Wiesler 25

This BOOK may be kept out ***TWO WEEKS ONLY,*** and is subject to a fine of FIVE CENTS a day thereafter. It was taken out on the day indicated below:

NOV 1 1	1926	10c	
DEC 2 1	1926	31Bc	
JAN 2 5	1927	347c	
NOV 1 2	192[illegible]	45d	
JAN 29	1929	219e	
MAR 1	1929	47e	

SIX PLAYS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/sixplays0000unse_c4j3

SIX PLAYS

CINDERELLA MARRIED
THREE PILLS IN A BOTTLE
COLUMBINE IN BUSINESS
THE PATCHWORK QUILT
WISDOM TEETH
THEORIES AND THUMBS

BY

RACHEL LYMAN FIELD

WITH FOREWORD

BY

GEORGE P. BAKER

Professor of the History and Technique of the Drama and Director of the University Theatre, Yale University
Formerly Professor of Dramatic Literature in Harvard University

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1925

COPYRIGHT, 1924, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

COPYRIGHT, 1917, 1922, BY
RACHEL LYMAN FIELD

Printed in the United States of America

All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union, by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

Three Pills in a Bottle is here
reprinted with permission of Brentano's.

FOR

E. M.

A POCKETFUL OF PLAYS

FOREWORD

Here are six one-act plays likely to be particularly serviceable to amateur actors of school age—eight to eighteen. They call for small casts, never more than eight persons, usually four to six. Though the initial stage directions in some cases, as "Three Pills in a Bottle," may seem to demand settings as elaborate as that provided for the first performance of this play in "The 47 Workshop,"[1] experience has proved that "Three Pills in a Bottle," as well as its companions, may be given satisfactorily on a stage of suggestion—curtains or screens with merely indicated windows and doors.

Without young children some of these plays cannot be adequately acted. For instance, "The Patchwork Quilt" and "Theories and Thumbs" demand a small child as Betty-Molly, and as the little Egyptian Princess. Moreover, I strongly suspect that when clever children play the souls in "Three Pills in a Bottle," the contrast between them and the older actors as the real people, shows the play at its best. "Columbine in Business," "Cinderella Married," and "Wisdom Teeth" deal only with broad types. The characters may be successfully presented by young actors in whom, for the moment, ambition and intelligence take the place of technical experience. Though "The Patchwork Quilt" stands or falls on the playing of old Mrs. Willis and the part makes real demands on its portrayer, the rest of the characters are again broad types not difficult to act. Similarly in "Theories and Thumbs," an effective performance depends chiefly on how well Annie Morrison, the caretaker, is played. That is, groups in which there are one or two actors

[1]See Frontispiece, "Plays of the 47 Workshop," Vol. I, Brentano's.

able from considerable experience, with others eager to train themselves on less difficult but yet rewarding parts, will find some of the plays in this volume specially fitted to their needs.

All the pieces here printed, except "Wisdom Teeth," are on the borderland where fact shifts into fancy. "Cinderella Married," "Columbine in Business," even, I suspect, "Wisdom Teeth," played by grammar-school boys and girls will be much more effective than if acted by adults. When the supposed grown-ups in them are played by grown-ups, the resulting reality is undesirable. Present these plays as whimsy and they may be made delightful. Let the hard, white light of reality beat on them and they dissolve. If the six plays are to have the best effect, they should not be life, only suggest it. Youth playing middle life and age, immaturity offering itself as maturity,—this creates just the needed atmosphere, gives just the right touch.

The plays make few, if any, demands for the strong emotional acting usually beyond the powers of the relatively inexperienced or untrained. Instead, they call for naïveté, charm, delicacy—the very qualities which childhood and youth best supply. Yet actors developing through them these qualities, will find themselves possessed of just the equipment for playing thoroughly well what is lightly comic, gently touching, or whimsically pathetic.

Many a printed play reads better than it acts. Probably the converse is true of the contents of this volume. Certainly, "Three Pills in a Bottle" acts even better than it reads; it is a play of unusual acting quality. Ever since its enthusiastic reception on its "first night" in "The 47 Workshop" years ago, it has been given, week in, week out, all over the United States, under almost every conceivable condition of stage equipment and cast. However, be the stage ample or cramped, the settings and lighting elaborate or crude, the acting skilled or merely ambitious, "Three Pills in a Bottle" has always satisfied the actors and pleased its audiences. It shows to the highest degree

the particular quality of the short plays of Miss Field; though, naturally, they are at their best when staged with all the advantages which setting, lighting, and, above all, skilled acting can provide, with all these not what they might be but only what circumstances permit, they still give largely of the pleasure which the author intended.

Here, then, is a volume of plays, not—what is too usual—about children and youths for adults to act, but of plays about children and adults, which for their best presentation must be acted by youth itself.

George P. Baker.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Cinderella Married	3
Three Pills in a Bottle	37
Columbine in Business	65
The Patchwork Quilt	95
Wisdom Teeth	117
Theories and Thumbs	135

CINDERELLA MARRIED

CHARACTERS

LADY CAROLINE

LADY ARABELLA

CINDERELLA

NANNIE

PRINCE CHARMING

ROBIN

This play was first performed by THE STOCKBRIDGE STOCKS at the Fifteenth Street Theatre, New York City, April 24, 1922. Copyrighted 1922, by Rachel Lyman Field.

All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union, by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. Moving Picture rights reserved.

Attention is called to the penalties provided by law for any infringements of the dramatist's rights, as follows:

"Sec. 4966:—Any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition for which copyright has been obtained, without the consent of the proprietor of said dramatic or musical composition, or his heirs and assigns, shall be liable for damages therefor, such damages in all cases to be assessed at such sum, not less than one hundred dollars for the first and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance, as to the court shall appear to be just. If the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, such person or persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year."—U. S. Revised Statutes, Title 60, Chap. 3.

CINDERELLA MARRIED

A Hitherto Unpublished Chapter

TIME: *The day before yesterday.*

SCENE: Cinderella's *little morning room. A charming place with an open fire burning, sun streaming in at long French windows. Two Ladies-in-Waiting, the* Lady Arabella *and the* Lady Caroline, *both haughty beauties, are seated before the fire when the curtain rises. Their heads are bent close over an elaborate piece of embroidery, which facilitates gossip.*

Lady Caroline. And they are to breakfast here together, Cinderella and the Prince?

Lady Arabella. [*With feigned indifference.*] They have on each of the four anniversaries, and why stop? The Prince is still sentimental! Why, he'd send his man packing if he should forget to remind him of the day.

Lady C. Then you think he might not remember it himself?

Lady A. [*Shrugging.*] Why should he? They're *married.*

Lady C. Five years today.

Lady A. Besides it's not a Prince's place to remember his wedding day—that's his valet's to remind him to breakfast with her, and his gardener's to grow the flowers he gives her, and his chef's to prepare the banquet——

Lady C. [*Interrupting with a laugh.*] Oh, Arabella, now I know why you changed your day for waiting on

her! It was clever of you to plan to be about when he breakfasts here!

LADY A. [*Quickly.*] And if I did, what of it? I am his cousin.

LADY C. [*Smiling knowingly.*] And his sweetheart as well, till Cinderella came along! Oh, we all know the story.

LADY A. [*With a toss of her head.*] Indeed? How flattering to find oneself even as a minor character in the romance of Cinderella!

LADY C. Oh, come, my dear, you could never be a minor character anywhere. [*Sympathetically.*] Everyone knows you should have married him. Why she knows it herself! Indeed, I feel quite sorry for her sometimes.

LADY A. [*Firmly.*] I do *not* feel sorry for her, but I do for Charming—it's always so much harder for the man!

LADY C. [*Agreeing.*] An air of mystery and a glass slipper can never make up for—well, other things.

LADY A. And Charming is *so* sensitive. That was how it all began. We had been out hunting the morning of that dreadful ball, and I teased him about something, I forget now what it was, but he rode back in a pique and never danced with me once that evening. Of course she had to choose that particular night to appear——

LADY C. Of course.

LADY A. And had the good sense to run away before he'd seen enough to be tired of her; left that ridiculous slipper behind and made a mystery of herself. I did think when he found her in her old clothes among the ashes he would come to his senses, but it only upset him the more. [*Emphatically.*] Well, my advice is—rescue damsels if you must, but *don't* marry them!

LADY C. [*Thoughtfully.*] Still, if he hadn't married her, he might have gone on all the rest of his days wishing

he had—just the way you go about wishing you'd married him even though you have that nice Duke for a husband.

LADY A. [*Sagely.*] There's something about the ones we almost marry—why I dare say even Cinderella sometimes mourns for some country lout she left forever when she came to the palace. [*A door slams and they exchange warning glances and bend over their work.*] Hush, Nannie's coming.

[NANNIE *enters from door right, a pretty little maid in charming costume. She is young and simple and quite openly despises the ladies-in-waiting, who regard her with marked disfavor. She curtsies to them and starts for the door left.*

Is she ready for us, Nannie?

NANNIE. [*Pertly.*] Well, Lady Arabella, now you ask me, it was her breakfast, not you, she spoke of wanting!

LADY A. [*Sternly.*] Nannie!

NANNIE. [*From the door.*] And she ordered it served here, for two. [*She goes out with a meaning glance and a flounce of her skirts.*]

LADY A. Impudent little hussy!

LADY C. [*Sighing.*] To see her one would think she was the lady-in-waiting and we were the serving maids.

LADY A. Cinderella refuses to keep a maid in her proper place. [*Low as they see* CINDERELLA *through curtains at door right leading to her bedroom.*] Here she comes now and in her new robe. It's yellow—and if she were wise she'd stick to blue, it's much more her type, simple and appealing. It takes an aristocrat to carry off yellow.

LADY C. [*Smiling.*] And now she's beginning to grow fat, and she can never carry herself like a princess the way you do.

LADY A. [*Protesting.*] I shouldn't know how to sweep ashes!

LADY C. Hush, she's coming.

[CINDERELLA *enters from her bedroom door right. She stands for a moment near the curtains, pretty and charming in an appealing, unsophisticated way, but she lacks the proud assurance of her ladies-in-waiting. Indeed she gives the impression of an older* NANNIE, *dressed up to look like a princess. Her hair hangs in loose curls on her shoulders. While she is not actually fat, it cannot be denied that plumpness is not many years away. She wears an exquisite gown of gold brocade, beneath which red slippers peep in daring contrast. She pauses at the curtains, sees the ladies-in-waiting and stiffens visibly. Then putting on as bold a face as possible, she advances timidly, holding out her hand to be kissed with the little awkward gesture of one not quite to the manner born.*

CINDERELLA. [*A trifle nervously.*] Good morning, Arabella— good morning, Caroline. [*There is a pause, and finally for want of something better,* CINDERELLA *stammers.*] It's a very beautiful day.

LADY A. [*With a patronizing air.*] And your wedding anniversary.

CINDERELLA. [*Shyly pleased.*] The Prince will be here for breakfast at ten.

LADY A. [*With raised eyebrows.*] At ten? Isn't that rather early for him?

CINDERELLA. It's very late for me. I wake early you see. [*Hurriedly explaining.*] It's a habit of mine, and I get very hungry.

LADY A. Hungry! Dear me, what an odd sensation!

[*Changing subject pointedly.*] You're looking exquisite this morning.

LADY C. The brocade is perfect.

CINDERELLA. [*Fingering the skirt.*] It is a pretty color, I think. [*Reminiscently.*] Almost as yellow as our butter used to be after I'd finished the churning.

LADY A. [*With a superior smile.*] Really? Now if your Highness' hair were done high and caught up with the amber and sapphire comb.

CINDERELLA. [*Protesting.*] But I think it becomes me like this.

LADY A. [*Regarding her so critically that* CINDERELLA *squirms under the scrutiny.*] Pretty enough for Nannie or the village girls perhaps, but the amber comb is very regal.

CINDERELLA. [*Resignedly.*] Very well, then, Arabella, I'll wear it. [*To* LADY C.] Go and bring it, Caroline. [LADY C. *goes into bedroom.*]

LADY A. [*Still studying* CINDERELLA.] And the belt, —it should be a trifle tighter and clasped so. [*She adjusts it and* CINDERELLA *stands meekly as she does so.*]

CINDERELLA. [*In feeble protest.*] The tassels are so long, they thump against my legs at every step.

LADY A. [*Reprovingly.*] Not if you walk with a gliding motion, like this. [*She illustrates.*]

CINDERELLA. [*Trying to do likewise.*] If I were a snake I could do it better.

LADY A. [*Bristling.*] Because I do not hop or jerk about when I walk am I to be called a snake?

CINDERELLA. [*Hastily.*] I meant no harm, Arabella, but you see I have two feet——

LADY A. [*Coldly.*] So I see. [*Smiling unpleasantly.*] And you always did make a point of wearing conspicuous slippers!

[LADY CAROLINE *re-enters with comb, brush, mirror, etc. She kneels before* CINDERELLA, *holding up the mirror while* LADY A. *piles the curls high, fastening them in place with a carved comb. As she works she addresses* CINDERELLA *patronizingly.*

LADY A. For the short of stature nothing adds so much to the height and dignity as wearing the hair very high.

CINDERELLA. [*Plaintively.*] But there are times when I do not feel like being dignified and the comb is very heavy.

LADY C. But the sapphires shine so in your hair—like little blue pools in a field of yellow corn.

CINDERELLA. [*Practically.*] Oh, Caroline, corn never grows where the ground is damp. The soil must be warm and dry without any pools at all!

LADY C. [*With a smile at* LADY A.] We have had little experience in cornfields!

LADY A. [*Finishing hairdressing.*] There, it's done. Will your Highness look in the mirror?

CINDERELLA. [*Without enthusiasm.*] Yes, it is skillfully made. [*Pointing to mirror.*] You may take it away, Caroline. [*A knock sounds at the door and* LADY C. *goes, opening it a crack.*]

LADY C. [*From door.*] It is Nannie, your Highness.

LADY A. [*With disapproval.*] Tell her the Princess is occupied.

CINDERELLA. [*Timidly.*] No, Arabella, I sent her on an errand and I would have her come in.

LADY A. [*With resigned disapproval.*] Oh, I merely thought she was intruding as usual.

CINDERELLA. But Nannie is my maid and——

LADY A. [*With meaning.*] And we are your ladies-in-waiting—there is a difference, sometimes confused.

CINDERELLA. Tell her she may come in. [NANNIE *is summoned and* LADY C. *takes mirror, etc. in other room.* CINDERELLA *to* LADY A.] I need delay you no longer.

LADY A. But if the Prince comes he will think——

CINDERELLA. The Prince will not think— [*Low with a little sigh.*] about me.

LADY C. [*From door.*] We will see that no one intrudes.

[*They bow and exeunt. The minute they are gone* CINDERELLA *is suddenly transformed. Her hang-dog expression disappears and she is no longer timid and ill at ease. She gives a quick look to make sure the two have gone and then her hand flies to her waist. Unloosening the girdle she draws a deep breath.*

CINDERELLA. Thank heaven, we're rid of them! [*Pulling a pin from her hair, glaring at it.*] There, that's out, they drove it straight into my skull I think!

NANNIE. [*Advancing.*] I brought the things, your Highness.

CINDERELLA. You're sure no one saw you take them?

[*She points to a little basket and part of a loaf* NANNIE *has brought out from under her apron.*

NANNIE. Not they—they were too busy down there eating hot cakes and dripping.

CINDERELLA. [*Wistfully.*] Hot cakes and dripping! How it makes my mouth water! [*Thoughtfully.*] Nannie, if anyone had told me when I was living on the table-scraps in my step-mother's kitchen that a princess couldn't have anything she wanted to eat, I'd have laughed, yes, I should!

NANNIE. [*Sighing as she toasts some bread.*] It's a dreadful responsibility, being a Princess.

CINDERELLA. Oh, just think, Nannie, what a tale they'll tell about me forever and forever—Cinderella sitting in the ashes one day and on a throne the next! But they'll never say anything about how hungry she got for the things she was afraid to ask for.

NANNIE. Never mind, Your Highness, there'd be nothing for poor maids to be dreaming about if it wasn't for you and the ball and the glass slippers.

CINDERELLA. [*Uneasily.*] Don't mention them, please, Nannie—is the bread toasted yet?

NANNIE. Just done to a turn.

CINDERELLA. [*Helping herself to a piece.*] Oh, it's good! Have you any cheese that I can nibble?

NANNIE. [*Hesitating.*] But I thought you were afraid it made you f——, I mean that it might be fattening.

CINDERELLA. [*Eyeing the piece* NANNIE *brings out.*] What's the good of being married if you can't celebrate your own wedding day? [*She nibbles at it daintily. A nearby clock strikes and she starts uncomfortably at the sound.*] Nannie, it's time to go and get them.

NANNIE. He—he may not ask this time.

CINDERELLA. Oh, but he will, and this is a habit now, so go and bring them.

[NANNIE *goes over to the little cabinet in the corner. Takes out the glass slippers, bringing them carefully to* CINDERELLA.]

NANNIE. [*Handling them with awe.*] Such pretty things, sometimes I grow afraid when I look at them and think——

CINDERELLA. I'm afraid, too, sometimes, Nannie.

NANNIE. [*On the floor beside her.*] Why should you

be? They just make me shiver a bit, thinking how they were like magic and brought him to you.

CINDERELLA. I didn't know when my Godmother gave them to me that night, all they could do. She never told me. Well, [*Kicking off her slippers with a determined air.*] put them on and remember to be very careful.

NANNIE. It took a deal of coaxing to get you into them last year. [*She begins to put them on.*]

CINDERELLA. And I had to make all sorts of excuses for not walking about, but he never guessed.

NANNIE. [*Struggling with them.*] They do seem small, smaller than last year. [*They continue to struggle.*]

CINDERELLA. [*Panting a little.*] It's just I'm not used to them.

NANNIE. [*Tactfully.*] Well, try the other one. They do say everybody's right foot is bigger than the left, or maybe it's the other way round!

CINDERELLA. [*Growing worried as they continue to be unsuccessful.*] But I must get them on, even if they hurt me.

NANNIE. [*Bracing herself, for a last effort.*] I'm doing my best, your Highness, but it's like—like trying to put a chicken back in the shell it just came out of!

CINDERELLA. You can push harder.

NANNIE. Your Highness, they'll never go on!

CINDERELLA. [*Frightened.*] They must, Nannie, they must! I could never face the Prince without them. He's always believed I had the smallest feet in the kingdom—why, my feet are famous!

NANNIE. I know—Cinderella and her slippers.

CINDERELLA. [*Pleadingly.*] He fell in love with my feet and now they're all that's left.

NANNIE. But I can't get the slippers on. [*Solemnly.*] Your feet have *spread!*

CINDERELLA. [*Stunned as she senses the awful truth.*] Well, he must never know. If he found out it would be the end [*A little wildly.*] of everything. [*She reaches down and picks one up, examining it.*] See, this is the one I dropped on the stairs, there's that scratch on it.

NANNIE. [*With awe.*] The one he picked up——?

CINDERELLA. Yes, and carried in his pockets the days he went searching for me.

NANNIE. [*Thoughtfully.*]..I wonder now it didn't break, thumping next his heart like that and he on his horse and glass slippers so easily broken——

CINDERELLA. Yes, they're easily broken—— [*Looking down at the one in her hand and repeating it as if it were a new idea.*] *Very easily broken.*

NANNIE. Shall I put them back now?

CINDERELLA. [*Rousing herself.*] I suppose that's best. As far back in the cabinet as you can. [NANNIE *does so.* CINDERELLA *suddenly casting off her wistful mood, starts up quickly.*] Nannie, give me the toasting fork! [*She catches it up, drops to the hearth and begins toasting a sausage while* NANNIE *hovers by remonstrating.*]

NANNIE. But, your Highness, you'll be dirtying your new robe. Here, let me do it for you!

CINDERELLA. No, Nannie, no! I'm sick of chairs and cushions. I want to feel the good hard floor under me and toast my own sausage and eat it all hot and sizzling!

NANNIE. But his Highness might——

CINDERELLA. Oh, he's always late! Nannie, quick, cut me a slice of bread! [*While* NANNIE *is doing this the door right opens softly and the* PRINCE *appears on the threshold, carrying in one hand a vase containing a single orchid.*]

PRINCE. [*From doorway.*] Cinderella, my dear, behold me, even at this abominable hour! [*He bows.*] It

took six chamberlains to accomplish it, but such is the extent of my affection. [CINDERELLA *starts, then chokes on a bite of sausage. The* PRINCE *advances a step or two, sniffing the air delicately and curiously.*] My love, what a curious smell—like Fair Day in the village! [*He puts down the vase and goes to her, seeing the sausage in her hand.*] Good heavens! you'—you're not eating it? What is it?

CINDERELLA. [*Timidly.*] It's a sausage, Charming.

PRINCE. A sausage! That terrible smell! I feel quite ill already! [*Taking out his lace handkerchief and holding it lightly to his nose.*]

CINDERELLA. I'm sorry, dear—I thought you would be late.

PRINCE. [*With sad reproachfulness.*] But that you should want such things! Should actually crave them! What prestige do you suppose we should have left in the kingdom if it leaked out that the Princess Cinderella ate sausages, even cooked them in her own apartments? [*To* NANNIE.] Nannie, a word of this would cost you your position, your character and even that pretty head of yours. Do you understand?

NANNIE. [*Quavering.*] Yes, your Highness.

PRINCE. [*Turning again to* CINDERELLA.] Besides, my dear, you know such things are fattening.

CINDERELLA. [*Rebelliously.*] But I like them!

PRINCE. Since you were not born with an aristocratic figure, you might at least try to keep the one you have!

CINDERELLA. [*On the verge of tears.*] And you might at least try to be pleasant today.

PRINCE. That dreadful smell made me forget everything.

CINDERELLA. You may go now, Nannie, and order our breakfast. [*Exit* NANNIE.]

PRINCE. [*Seating himself.*] Oh, Cinderella, why will you forget yourself like this—sitting on the floor and eating [*He shudders*] a sausage! [*A pause.*] And you have some ashes on your gown.

CINDERELLA. There was a time you didn't mind ashes.

PRINCE. That was before we were married.

CINDERELLA. [*Plaintively.*] Just because Cinderella's married she must do none of the things she likes.

PRINCE. [*Protesting.*] But how was I to know the strange things you were going to like?

CINDERELLA. You know now!

PRINCE. I do! [*Softening.*] Come, dear, don't let's quarrel. My head is splitting from this early rising—besides someone might hear us.

CINDERELLA. There's only Caroline and Arabella in my antechamber.

PRINCE. [*Pleased.*] So—this is Arabella's morning.

CINDERELLA. That can hardly surprise or offend you.

PRINCE. [*Instantly on the defensive.*] Just because Arabella is my cousin and I'm fond of her——

CINDERELLA. [*With meaning.*] *Not* because she's your cousin.

PRINCE. [*To change the subject.*] Your new robe is ravishing, my dear.

CINDERELLA. [*Earnestly.*] You like it—really?

PRINCE. Yes, it adds to your height and makes you look more slender. [CINDERELLA *sighs.*] By the way, [*He goes to the table and takes up vase with orchid.*] You must wear this in honor of the day. [*He brings it to her.*]

CINDERELLA. It was lovely of you to remember, Charming.

PRINCE. [*Proudly.*] The gardener has been working for months so it would bloom today.

CINDERELLA. [*Her face falling.*] The gardener—then he—he chose it?

PRINCE. He knows orchids are the only flowers for a Princess. Come put it on.

CINDERELLA. [*Taking it.*] I wonder it should take such a little flower so long to grow. Why our sunflowers at home bloomed in no time and they were much more to look at. And our geraniums— [*Wistfully.*] I love red geraniums.

PRINCE. [*Drawing back.*] My darling, orchids and geraniums!

CINDERELLA. But geraniums are such cheerful flowers, don't you think?

PRINCE. [*Firmly.*] In kitchen windows perhaps—elsewhere they're very depressing. [*Admiring the effect of the flower on her gown.*] That's very effective. [*Critically then as his eyes travel down her costume to her feet.*] Where are your slippers?

CINDERELLA. [*Hesitating.*] Why you see— [*Inspired.*] I wanted to see if you would notice. I thought perhaps you would forget.

PRINCE. [*Waxing sentimental.*] Why should I forget our romance, Cinderella? The glass slippers were the keys that opened the door to it, and when I see you with them on and know that only you out of all the country can wear them——

CINDERELLA. [*Breaking in hurriedly.*] Yes, yes, my dear, but I'll ring for breakfast first. [*She pulls bell cord.*] You must be hungry.

PRINCE. Hungry! When will you learn that food is something one doesn't enjoy; one simply complains about it sometimes! Besides, at this hour of the morning.

CINDERELLA. [*Prattling to distract him from the slippers.*] But it's after ten! That used to seem nearly din-

ner time to me in the old days, and my breakfast, well, I wasn't supposed to have any, but the milkman was always good to me—many's the little meal we had in the kitchen together round five in the morning.

PRINCE. [*Shuddering.*] Horrible, my dear, you must try to forget it! The Milkman, Good God, to think that I should be his successor!

CINDERELLA. [*Hurt.*] He was a very nice milkman. [*Reminiscently.*] Sometimes he used to hold my hand in his when he'd help me rake down the fire. I could never have men come to call on me afternoons or evenings for my sisters were always using the parlor, so early in the morning was my one chance.

PRINCE. Come, my dear, there's no need to stir up the dark places in your past.

CINDERELLA. If you're referring to the milkman——?

PRINCE. He's only part of the coal-scuttle episode in your career, you promised to forget.

CINDERELLA. [*Tearfully.*] It's all very well for you to have Arabella and the others in your past but I can't even speak of a milkman who was kind to me! [*She cries. There is a knock at the door and breakfast is brought in by* NANNIE, *followed by the two ladies-in-waiting.*]

PRINCE. [*To* CINDERELLA.] In heaven's name, don't let them see you've been crying! Go and bathe your eyes and put some powder on. [*She goes into the other room, while* NANNIE *begins setting out the breakfast things on the table center.* PRINCE *catches* ARABELLA'S *eye and goes* to her.]

PRINCE. Arabella! This is delightful, and the Lady Caroline. [*He bows to them both, moving nearer* ARABELLA.] You're looking enchanting today.

LADY A. [*Archly.*] Today!

PRINCE. [*Quickly.*] Today with you means every day. You know that, my dear.

LADY A. That depends on who looks at me, Charming!

PRINCE. [*Low and daring.*] Well, I'm looking, Arabella.

ARABELLA. [*Also low.*] Hush, you must be careful, she might hear you.

PRINCE. She's in the other room.

LADY A. But Nannie has ears and she knows how to use them, the little Minx! [*Turning to the* LADY CAROLINE.] Get rid of her, Caroline.

LADY C. [*To* NANNIE.] You may go now, Nannie, we will see to this. [NANNIE *goes reluctantly.*]

PRINCE. [*To* LADY C.] And see if you can assist the Princess Cinderella.

[LADY CAROLINE *bows and goes into next room with a knowing smile.*

PRINCE. [*Seating himself by* ARABELLA.] At last, my dear, I can have two words alone with you.

LADY A. [*Meaningly.*] It used to be three words, Charming; but you always were cautious.

PRINCE. You wouldn't have accused me of that once.

LADY A. No, but I've learned so many things about you since——

PRINCE. [*Quickly breaking in.*] Since we rode out to the hunt together and sat with our cheeks pressed close in that little grape arbor at the foot of the garden.

LADY A. You've not forgotten the way to it, I see! But then I daresay you often find it useful?

PRINCE. [*Retorting gaily.*] Perhaps! [*He edges nearer, speaking softly again.*] There was a little pool nearby, do you remember, where we found yellow and white water lilies?

LADY A. [*Smiling.*] Yes, and you liked the yellow ones best then, you silly boy.

PRINCE. They seemed like gold with the sun on them, till I waded in and pulled one out. But when I held it in my hand it was only a plain yellow flower with a thick stem.

LADY A. You were very stubborn about it too, Charming! I remember you insisted on carrying it back to the palace.

PRINCE. I tried it in ten different vases, but it never would look right. At last the petals shut fast and all at once I knew the white water lilies were more beautiful.

LADY A. Foolish boy.

PRINCE. Yes, he was foolish. [*Taking her hands and speaking earnestly.*] Do you understand what I'm trying to say, Arabella?

LADY A. [*Playfully putting him off.*] Perhaps I do, and then perhaps I don't!

PRINCE. Women and flowers have been compared before, my dear, and you—you are very like those white water lilies, and Cinderella, poor child, is as out of place here as that yellow one I tried to transplant.

LADY A. [*Lightly but with meaning.*] If one tires of a flower one may throw it away, so of course you had the white one next day.

PRINCE. But suppose someone had picked it first and I had to see it just out of reach across another's window sill? [*His arms tighten about her.*] Arabella, Arabella, don't you know it's torture to me, seeing you move about the corridors, watching you smile across the ballroom?

LADY A. [*Pleased, but protesting.*] You mustn't—she might——

PRINCE. [*Half to himself.*] Oh, I wouldn't hurt her, she does her best, poor little thing. I daresay she hasn't

found me what she expected. [*A little bitterly.*] It was all a mistake—a mistake made in the name of romance.

LADY A. [*Slipping from his arms.*] Quick, she's coming!

PRINCE. [*Low, following her to the door.*] You'll let me see you soon, Arabella, there's so much to say. Can't we slip off somewhere for an hour?

ARABELLA. [*From the door.*] The little grape arbor is still at the foot of the garden.

PRINCE. The grape arbor, then, in an hour.

[*She goes out blowing him a little kiss. He has hardly turned away when* CINDERELLA *appears in the other door. She eyes him a trifle suspiciously.*

CINDERELLA. Come, I have kept you from breakfast too long, but Caroline found my hair was coming down and my train must be brushed and the patch for my neck had been forgotten. [*Her back is towards the* PRINCE, *who slyly blows* CAROLINE *a grateful kiss.*]

PRINCE. A great improvement, my dear.

CINDERELLA. And we don't need to keep Caroline any longer, do we? We'll just have a cozy little breakfast here together, and I'll pour your coffee and you can pass me the honey.

[LADY CAROLINE *bows and goes out. Left alone* CINDERELLA *and the* PRINCE *are silent for a little while as* CINDERELLA *busies herself over the breakfast things.*

CINDERELLA. [*Making an effort at conversation.*] Here's your coffee, dear. I put plenty of cream in and two lumps.

PRINCE. [*Groans and passes it back.*] With my headache that would kill me! Black, Cinderella, always black at this hour of the morning!

CINDERELLA. [*Trying to be cheerful.*] Oh, very well, I'll keep this for myself.

PRINCE. With all that cream and sugar? Oh, my love, think of your figure!

CINDERELLA. [*Hurt.*] I'm not fat, Charming, and I don't think it's kind of you to say I am.

PRINCE. I didn't say you *are* fat, I said you *would* be.

CINDERELLA. [*Passing him another cup.*] Here's your coffee—clear. [*Another pause.*]

PRINCE. [*To make conversation.*] Have you been to the nursery this morning?

CINDERELLA. No, the nurse says I disturb him, and— [*Thoughtfully.*] I don't think he likes me, Charming.

PRINCE. Nonsense, why shouldn't he?

CINDERELLA. But he looks at me very disapprovingly from his cradle— [*Reproachfully.*] the way you do sometimes.

PRINCE. [*With a sudden show of interest.*] Does he do that to you, too?

CINDERELLA. And he cries when I come near him.

PRINCE. Oh, come dear, don't be so tragic because he happened to cry! He always cries when he looks at me!

CINDERELLA. He doesn't want me and he isn't two years old! [*Another silence.*]

PRINCE. [*Passing her the grapes.*] Have some black hamburgs.

CINDERELLA. No, thank you, they're too big.

PRINCE. [*Astonished.*] Too big? But that's the way they should be. These are uncommonly fine ones.

CINDERELLA. They're too sweet.

PRINCE. But how could they be?

CINDERELLA. [*Despairingly.*] Well, you said we must only find fault with the things we eat. Besides I'm not hungry now— [*The* PRINCE *represses a smile remember-*

ing the sausages. There is another long pause as CINDERELLA *rests her head on her hand thoughtfully.*] Charming, is this the way you thought it would be?

PRINCE. [*Preoccupied.*] What do you mean?

CINDERELLA. Happy-ever-after, you know, the way they said it would be, Godmother and the rest?

PRINCE. [*Mechanically.*] Yes, dear.

CINDERELLA. [*Resignedly.*] That's what you always say.

PRINCE. But what else is there to say, dear?

CINDERELLA. You find ever so many things to say to Arabella!

PRINCE. [*Irritated.*] Oh, don't begin on that today, please! [*More gently.*] Why did you ask me that just now?

CINDERELLA. I don't know, I just wondered, that's all. [*Another pause.*] Will you have some honey?

PRINCE. No, dear. [*Starting.*] Good heavens, I nearly forgot them again!

CINDERELLA. What, Charming?

PRINCE. Your glass slippers.

CINDERELLA. Oh, never mind.

PRINCE. But I do mind. Why, you've worn them each wedding day. [*Rising.*] Let me bring them.

CINDERELLA. [*Nervously.*] No, no, wait, not now.

PRINCE. But I must see them on. I knew there was something I missed.

CINDERELLA. [*Pleading.*] Wait till we've finished breakfast—you couldn't see them under the table anyway.

PRINCE. But I should know they were on, my dear.

CINDERELLA. [*Pleased in spite of herself.*] Would you really, Charming?

PRINCE. Perhaps it's vain of me, but I like to think

that there's no one else in the country with such small feet—that only Cinderella can wear them!

CINDERELLA. It's good to know there's still something —something of me you're proud of.

PRINCE. Let me bring the slippers.

CINDERELLA. No, no, Charming, please.

PRINCE. [*Puzzled and almost suspicious.*] But—but why—you're not—they're not——?

[*Here there is a knock at the door.* CINDERELLA *is relieved but the* PRINCE *frowns at the interruption.*

CINDERELLA. Come in.

LADY A. [*Entering.*] I am sorry, your Highness, but there is someone outside who insists on speaking with you.

CINDERELLA. With me? Who is it?

LADY A. [*With a superior smile.*] It's a person from one of the villages, I think he said the one where you used to live. He's very oddly dressed and his hair is, well, carrotty, and he mumbled his name so I couldn't hear.

CINDERELLA. Carrotty hair! Oh, it must be—no, it couldn't be Robin!

PRINCE. Robin?

CINDERELLA. Yes, our Milkman, the one who was so kind to me.

PRINCE. Heaven prevent!

LADY A. [*Scornfully producing bunch of red geraniums.*] And he forced these upon me!

CINDERELLA. [*Alight with pleasure.*] Oh, then, it *is* Robin! He's brought geraniums for me just the way he always used to! Hurry, Arabella, and bring him here. Oh, I can't wait to see Robin and hear all the news!

PRINCE. [*Dryly.*] I think—er—it would be more tactful for me to withdraw. You must have Robin all to

yourself, my dear. [*He exchanges a sly smile with* LADY A.]

CINDERELLA. And you won't mind, Charming, really?

PRINCE. No, I'll come back when he's gone.

[LADY ARABELLA *goes out, giving the* PRINCE *a knowing little smile.* CINDERELLA *buries her face delightedly in the geraniums.*

CINDERELLA. Aren't they beautiful? So big and red —did you ever see any so red?

PRINCE. [*Very bored.*] No, dear, never.

[*He goes out.* NANNIE *then ushers in a stocky fellow in stiff, quaintly cut clothes, clumsy shoes and heavy woolen stockings. He is mopping his face with a handkerchief which swears with his complexion.* CINDERELLA *greets him joyfully.*

CINDERELLA. Oh, Robin, is it really you?

ROBIN. [*Awkwardly.*] Yes, I be same as ever I was, for all you've growed to be a Princess and all dressed up so fine!

CINDERELLA. [*To* NANNIE.] Nannie, bring Robin some cakes and wine.

ROBIN. Don't you be troubling the young lady. I had my breakfast three hour ago and what sort of a stomach would I be bringing to my dinner if I had cakes and wine now?

CINDERELLA. Never mind, then, Nannie. [NANNIE *bows and goes out.* CINDERELLA *and her visitor look at one another, pleased but shy.*] You'll sit down. [CINDERELLA *seats herself.* ROBIN *follows suit, awkwardly.*]

ROBIN. I don't know as I should, now you're a Princess and me not knowing of their ways.

CINDERELLA. [*Eagerly.*] Oh, I'm just the same.

ROBIN. How could you be, begging your pardon, and you married to the Prince?

CINDERELLA. [*Softly.*] Can't you forget either that I'm married?

ROBIN. But that's why I come, to wish you joy on the day and bring you the flowers. I minded you were always fond of them, and they become you, too.

CINDERELLA. Oh, Robin, Robin, it's good to see you. Why didn't you come before?

ROBIN. [*Sheepishly.*] I did, every year on your wedding day, for it's a holiday and I've no work to do, but I never got beyond the gate before.

CINDERELLA. No one stopped you?

ROBIN. No, but they all looked at me so proud-like, and the stone lions were that fierce I'd always find my legs taking me back to the town again!

CINDERELLA. I'm glad you came this time, and brought me the geraniums. They're my favorite flowers. [*She toys with the orchid at her waist, finally substituting the geraniums.*] Now, Robin, tell me the news at home. [*Going over to the table.*] But first you must have some grapes.

ROBIN. [*With great display of interest.*] Grapes! and I've been thinking all along they must be plums!

CINDERELLA. They're black hamburgs and you can have them all. [*Wistfully.*] You used to carry chestnuts in your pockets, Robin.

ROBIN. [*Chuckling as he brings out a handful.*] So I do still, and they be fine ones this year.

CINDERELLA. [*As they sit side by side and she eats the nuts.*] Now tell me about everyone—my step-mother?

ROBIN. As ugly as ever, God help her!

CINDERELLA. How does she manage without me to scold?

ROBIN. [*Sagely.*] She gives a bit to everyone as

comes her way, so most keeps out of it! [*They laugh together.*]

CINDERELLA. And my sisters? I hear from them sometimes, when they want anything of me.

ROBIN. Well, since the old one married a merchant she's more stuck up than ever—don't notice me and the butcher, but [*With a wide grin.*] she's got the same wart on her chin and when she's angry——

CINDERELLA. [*Breaking in.*] I know what she's like then!

ROBIN. That you do! And the other one she's married to a Magistrate. Folks say she's got a velvet dress and a diamond brooch, but, Lord, I says, what good would they do her with that hook nose and teeth as yellow as oranges.

CINDERELLA. [*Musingly.*] And my Godmother, Robin, do you ever see her?

ROBIN. Poor old lady, after your grand wedding there was no peace for her at all! Every girl come running to her from miles around—pretty or ugly or cross as sticks, they all pestered her to fix them up same as she did you. All day long they'd be knocking at her door and way into the night, so she got no peace and one day she was gone. Nobody knows where she went.

CINDERELLA. It's strange——

ROBIN. It is. [*Brightening.*] Did I tell you about my pigs?

CINDERELLA. No, how many do you keep now?

ROBIN. Three—fine big ones. There was one I named after you, but I sold her last winter.

CINDERELLA. [*With serious interest.*] I hope she brought a good price.

ROBIN. She did. [*Eagerly.*] I've saved all the money

the pigs brought to buy me a new cart. [*Proudly.*] I drove over in it today for the first time.

CINDERELLA. Oh, how lovely, what color is it? Can I see it from the window? [*She runs to the French window, peering out.*]

ROBIN. [*Joining her and pointing.*] Behind that shrubbery there—it's red, with blue wheels and the spokes are yellow. It's a beautiful sight when the wheels go round!

CINDERELLA. [*Enthusiastically.*] It must be!

ROBIN. [*Growing more confidential.*] And there's a seat behind, with room for the milk tins underneath.

CINDERELLA. So you—you can always have company.

ROBIN. That's the way I planned it, Cinderella—I mean your Highness.

CINDERELLA. Call me Cinderella, please.

ROBIN. But I thought you'd be offended. [*Wistfully.*] I suppose now you're a Princess you have plenty of chances to ride in coaches and you wouldn't want to try my new cart? [*Earnestly.*] If I went too fast and you got scared you could lean over and hold on to me.

CINDERELLA. [*Wistfully.*] I'd love to ride in your cart, Robin. I always wanted to.

ROBIN. [*Bashfully.*] Maybe you've heard it's settled I'm to marry Jennie Mullins in the summer——? [*Loyally.*] But I wouldn't give her the first ride in my cart!

CINDERELLA. [*Drawing away at his words.*] Jennie Mullins—well—I hope you'll be very happy, Robin.

ROBIN. [*Doubtfully.*] I hope so indeed! 'Tisn't maybe as I had things planned afore you went off to that ball and everything happened so quick.

CINDERELLA. [*Touched.*] Yes, it *was* sudden, Robin. [*Softly.*] But I like to think you were fond of me. [*She*

lays her hand affectionately on his arm, and he takes it awkwardly in his.]

ROBIN. Your hand's softer'n it used to be when I helped you rake out the ashes.

CINDERELLA. Yes, but yours is just as big and strong. [*Suddenly a little conscience-stricken.*] I shouldn't let you hold it like this, [*Inspired.*] but you may kiss it.

ROBIN. [*Giggling with embarrassed pleasure.*] I'd like that. [*He kisses it gingerly.*] Can I do it again?

CINDERELLA. As often as you like, [*Explaining seriously.*] that's etiquette!

ROBIN. [*Chuckling.*] It's funny—but it's nice. I wish I'd thought of it before.

CINDERELLA. [*Sobering.*] I wish I'd thought of a great many things before.

ROBIN. It's growing late, but I could drive you quite a way afore dinner time.

CINDERELLA. Oh, dear, I'm afraid.

ROBIN. Nobody needs to know. I'll take you down a back road and you can put on an old dress so folks wouldn't think 'twas you.

CINDERELLA. [*Weakening.*] Nannie would help me slip out alone.

ROBIN. I'll wait for you by the shrubbery down there, the gate was open and nobody watching it.

CINDERELLA. [*With growing determination.*] I'll do it—I'll try——!

ROBIN. That's good, but I daren't wait long. Daisy's skittish today. I'll whistle when I get all ready and you can come. [*Admiringly.*] My, but you'll look nice up there behind me!

CINDERELLA. [*With shy meaning.*] And you'll hold me tight if Daisy goes very fast?

ROBIN. [*With a grin.*] Daisy can run when I tell her to, and I'll tell her!

CINDERELLA. Go back now, and I'll join you.

ROBIN. [*With a sheepish look toward her hand.*] Can I do it again?

CINDERELLA. [*Holding it out.*] Of course.

ROBIN. [*Kissing.*] I was scared to come, but you're just the same as when you were only Cinderella.

[*Exit* ROBIN. *He is hardly out of the door when* CINDERELLA *hurries towards her bedroom. She calls eagerly to* NANNIE, *and there is a new ring to her voice.*

CINDERELLA. [*Calling.*] Nannie! Nannie! Bring me my oldest cloak quickly! [NANNIE *runs out from the bedroom with cloak which she flings about* CINDERELLA.]

NANNIE. [*Wonderingly.*] You're not going out?

CINDERELLA. Perhaps I am—Nannie, suppose I should run away?

NANNIE. [*In surprise.*] But how could you? You're a Princess now, didn't he make you one same as if you'd been born in the palace?

[CINDERELLA *has turned back to the table where she stands fingering the orchid. She looks from it to the geraniums at her waist, turning from one flower to the other wistfully. It is plain that a struggle is going on between her loyalty to the* PRINCE *and his gift and her love for the other flowers and all they mean to her. Her painfully acquired sense of honor is beginning to assert itself.*

CINDERELLA. Yes, he made me a Princess. I ought to be grateful, and I am—nearly always.

NANNIE. And some day he'll be King and you'll be his Queen.

CINDERELLA. [*Shivering a little.*] Oh, I'm afraid to think of that day, and if I should shame him sometime before all the court! He's very kind to me when I make mistakes and I—— [*Hesitating.*] I must try harder to please him and be a real Princess. [*A whistle sounds shrilly outside,* CINDERELLA *starts.*]

NANNIE. And there's the little Prince——

CINDERELLA. Yes, there's the little Prince. [*She drops the geraniums, letting them fall from her wildly.*] Nannie, Nannie, I'm afraid. [*She clings to the girl for a moment.*]

NANNIE. Of what, your Highness?

CINDERELLA. Of Cinderella—she must try so hard to forget!

NANNIE. Forget what?

CINDERELLA. [*Plaintively.*] Oh, everything she likes —cinders and sausages and Milkmen! [*She pushes the cloak from her.*] Take it back, Nannie, and here—— [*Thrusting geraniums in her hands.*] Put them in the fire, but wait—wait till I've turned my back!

NANNIE. Why, whatever's come over you? Dear, dear, you shouldn't act so, not with His Highness round.

CINDERELLA. [*Drawing nearer again and speaking gently.*] Nannie, do you love someone?

NANNIE. Yes, your Highness, Peter and I have been keeping company ever since he was made the Prince's valet.

CINDERELLA. And do you love each other very much?

NANNIE. [*Sighing.*] So much—and we've no place to go courting in but the kitchen garden!

CINDERELLA. [*Earnestly.*] Then, Nannie, promise me you'll never let your Godmother interfere—no matter what she offers to do for you!

[*The opening of the door cuts her short as the* PRINCE *enters.* NANNIE *goes into the next room*

with the cloak and CINDERELLA *sinks wearily down.*

PRINCE. What alone, my dear? Did you scare away your old friend?

CINDERELLA. [*Absently.*] He's gone now, and I don't think he'll come again.

PRINCE. That's good, my dear. I knew you'd realize how impossible these meetings are. And now before I go——

CINDERELLA. Go where, Charming?

PRINCE. [*Lightly.*] Just for a walk in the garden to clear my head before luncheon.

CINDERELLA. [*Rising timidly.*] Shall I go too? I like to walk by the flower beds.

PRINCE. [*Hastily.*] Not this morning, dear—the glass slippers, you know, they'd never do on flagstones. I want to see them on your feet. Come, we'll put them on and you can sit here and think about the ball and how you danced in them.

CINDERELLA. [*Alarmed.*] I'd rather not—I—— [*But he has brought them from the cabinet and is kneeling down to put them on.*] Oh, Charming, I don't like to see them anymore!

PRINCE. [*Growing sentimental.*] Why not, dear? When I hold them I feel five years younger. I can hear the music playing and see you dancing. They caught the light and made your feet twinkle like two little lost snowflakes. See, this is the one you dropped on the stairs when you slipped away into the darkness.

CINDERELLA. Perhaps it would have been better if the darkness had swallowed me up forever.

PRINCE. But it didn't dear! [*Proudly.*] It was rather dashing of me to go after you like that, wasn't it?

CINDERELLA. Very dashing, Charming. [*Suddenly she*

reaches out her hands and takes the slippers from him with an air of determination.] Give them to me first, before you put them on.

[*He does so wonderingly. She rises and stands holding them by the fireplace. She presses them close to her for a moment, then lets them slip from her hands to the hearth where they crash. (For practical purposes it is better to have a small screen or fender up at the fireplace behind which the slippers drop and the crash of glass made off stage.) She turns to the* PRINCE *trembling and tearful and for a second they stare at each other without speaking.*

PRINCE. [*Shaken.*] Oh, my darling, I wouldn't have had this happen for half my kingdom! Your wonderful slippers.

CINDERELLA. But they were glass, dear.

PRINCE. [*Distractedly.*] They would have been a tradition.

CINDERELLA. Did you really expect me to put them on every year as long as I lived?

PRINCE. Why, of course.

CINDERELLA. [*With a half sad, half relieved sigh.*] Well, I can't do that now, Charming, they're just little bits of glass.

PRINCE. [*Sadly.*] Even the cleverest tinker could never mend them now.

CINDERELLA. [*Thoughtfully.*] And I never heard of a mended romance, did you?

PRINCE. No, once they're broken or cracked——

CINDERELLA. I'm afraid ours has been cracked for a long time, Charming. [*She sighs.*] It hasn't turned out the way Godmother expected, has it?

PRINCE. I'm afraid not, but I swear, Cinderella, I

never meant to hurt you. [*Lamely.*] And I've always been very proud of your feet.

CINDERELLA. [*Shyly.*] But my feet aren't broken!

PRINCE. Still, I'll never see them in glass slippers again.

CINDERELLA. [*With wistful earnestness.*] They were the last bits of the magic that brought us together and now they're smashed——

PRINCE. [*Correcting her mechanically.*] Broken, dear.

CINDERELLA. [*Obediently.*] Broken. [*Persisting.*] But I *did* wear them to the ball.

PRINCE. And I *did* go searching for you [*Sorry for her and making an effort to be kind.*] And if you want me to stay here with you instead of going out to the garden——?

CINDERELLA. [*Pleasantly.*] No, Charming, you must go—Arabella will scold you if you're late.

PRINCE. [*Hesitating.*] But now that the slippers——

CINDERELLA. [*A little sadly.*] But if the magic is all gone—oh, Charming, is it?

PRINCE. [*Half heartedly.*] Maybe there's a little of it somewhere.

CINDERELLA. [*Suddenly brightening.*] I believe I know where there is a little of it, a very little, but it might grow——

PRINCE. [*With blank hopefulness.*] Where?

CINDERELLA. In the nursery.

PRINCE. You don't mean——?

CINDERELLA. [*Triumphantly.*] Charming the second.

PRINCE. But do you think he—well—you know how he cries at us?

CINDERELLA. We must try to make him smile at us.

PRINCE. [*Inspired.*] Perhaps if I let him play with my crown——?

CINDERELLA. [*Quickly.*] No, dear, not yet. [*Pointing to the fragments of glass on the hearth.*] But if I gathered up all the little pieces and put them here in the sun, he might laugh to see it shining on them. [*Hopefully.*] Do you think he might, Charming?

PRINCE. He might. Shall I help you?

CINDERELLA. No, thank you, dear, go out to the garden. But tell the nurse to bring him here, and [*Eagerly.*] come back soon. [*She has dropped to her knees by the hearth, picking up the pieces.*] I want to pick up every piece myself! I feel at home on a hearth stone, but I promise not to let anyone find me here!

PRINCE. [*At the door.*] I'll tell them to get him ready. [*He turns to go.*]

CINDERELLA. [*Calling after him. This is her last little fling and she determines to have the last word.*] And, Charming, if Ara——, if anyone should ask you about the slippers, you'll always remember that I *could* have put them on, won't you? [*She is gathering up the bits as the curtain falls.*]

CURTAIN

THREE PILLS IN A BOTTLE*

A FANTASY IN ONE ACT

CHARACTERS

TONY SIMS
THE WIDOW SIMS, *his mother*
A MIDDLE-AGED GENTLEMAN
HIS SOUL
A SCISSORS GRINDER
HIS SOUL
A SCRUB WOMAN
HER SOUL

First produced by The 47 Workshop, November 16 and 17, 1917. Copyright, 1917, by Rachel Lyman Field. All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union, by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. Moving Picture rights reserved.

Attention is called to the penalties provided by law for any infringements of the dramatist's rights, as follows:

"Sec. 4966:—Any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition for which copyright has been obtained, without the consent of the proprietor of said dramatic or musical composition, or his heirs and assigns, shall be liable for damages therefor, such damages in all cases to be assessed at such sum, not less than one hundred dollars for the first and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance, as to the court shall appear to be just. If the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, such person or persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year."—U. S. Revised Statutes, Title 60, Chap. 3.

* NOTE:—This play is reprinted with permission of Brentano's from "Plays of the 47 Workshop," Vol. I, Harvard Plays Series.

THREE PILLS IN A BOTTLE

TIME: *Now or then.*

PLACE: *Anywhere or nowhere.*

SCENE: *A room in the* WIDOW SIMS' *house. The stage is dim when the curtain rises, but gradually it grows brighter, till the room is full of yellow sunlight, falling in sharp, fantastic patches on floor and walls. The day is so warm that the two windows, a small, high one at the left, and a large one at the back which overlooks the street, are open. Through this we see rows of houses opposite, their pointed roofs and faded colors making a brave showing in the hot sunshine of the street. At the right is a door, opening on the street, and at the back a substantial cupboard with two doors is built into the left corner. Over this is a shelf, containing various small articles—a few toys, some bits of china, etc. A wooden washtub, large and green, stands in the other corner. The only pieces of furniture are a table and two chairs, and a larger chair drawn up close to the window at the back center.*

In this, TONY, *the* WIDOW SIMS' *little ten-year-old boy is sleeping, an old patchwork quilt wrapped about him. His cheeks are very very red and there are dark circles under his eyes. At intervals he moves restlessly, muttering vaguely.*

Presently the WIDOW SIMS *comes tip-toeing in. She is a small, colorless person, with an habitual air of apology for something—she is not quite sure what! The door creaks to after her, and* TONY *opens his eyes.*

WIDOW SIMS. [*Bending over him regretfully.*] Dear, dear, 't is a pity that squeakin' door should 'a waked you. I thought you'd be sleeping all the morning while I'm out workin'. [*She kisses him.*]

TONY. Oh, I'm not sleepy, only hot [*Turning his head slowly toward the window.*] and all the houses over there are making faces at me!

WIDOW SIMS. [*Shaking her head.*] What a child! [*She sighs and fumbles in her pocket. Then her face brightens as she pulls out a small glass bottle.*] Never mind, Tony, the Doctor's just been giving me a fine cure for your fever—three days now, and you'll be well.

TONY. Three days? That's a long time to wait!

WIDOW SIMS. It's a very wonderful cure he said. Three pills, one for each day. [*She holds out the pills on the palm of her hand.*]

TONY. [*Peering at them.*] Yes, I can see them, but what will they do to me?

WIDOW SIMS. He said the yellow one will take away all the pain from your head. [*Dropping it in the bottle.*] Heaven be praised for that! The red one will make you grow tall and strong. [*Putting back the red one.*]

TONY. Tall enough to reach the moon, mother?

WIDOW SIMS. When you take the brown one your eyes will no longer ache [*Putting back the brown pill.*] and the near things and the far things will both look very clear.

TONY. [*Sitting up and reaching for the bottle.*] When can I take them? Now?

WIDOW SIMS. No, no, I'm to give you one each night the fever lasts [*She crosses and puts the bottle on the shelf.*] —first the red, then the yellow, and then the brown.

[TONY *turns away wearily, and the* WIDOW *goes*

to the table, putting some sewing materials in a bag.

WIDOW SIMS. They're very grand pills, Tony, and I paid two pounds for them. That's a great deal for a poor woman like me to pay!

TONY. Is it?

WIDOW SIMS. Three years I've been saving that, but you don't make much sewing all day, when you've never a man to come home after a day's work with the silver in his pockets.

TONY. I've got silver in mine. [*He takes out imaginary money, pretending to pile it on the sill.* WIDOW SIMS *starts at his words and takes a step towards him, then stops sadly, and goes back to the table with a sigh.*]

WIDOW SIMS. Well, well, I must be off now. [*Gathering up her things and going toward him.*]

TONY. [*Catching her hand as she passes.*] Where are you going to-day? To the big house that is so high up you can see the hills humping themselves up on top of each other, and farther away the sea that stops just where the sky begins?

WIDOW SIMS. [*Half to herself.*] Was ever such a boy for remembering? [*Kneeling by him, and wrapping the quilt about him more carefully.*] No, it's not there I'm going. And what'll you be doing while I'm gone? Do you want your picture-book? [TONY *shakes his head.*] Or your glass marble? [TONY *shakes his head again.*] Or your tin whistle?

TONY. No, I don't want any of them. I'd rather play with my friends.

WIDOW SIMS. Friends?

TONY. [*Absently.*] I have so many friends.

WIDOW SIMS. [*With a glance of despair.*] Out of his head again. [*She strokes his forehead.*] It's the fever

makes him so queer. [*Brightening a little.*] Oh, well, the pills will soon be setting him right. [*She kisses him and turns to go.*] I'll be back in time to get your dinner. Good-bye, Tony.

TONY. Good-bye, mother.

WIDOW SIMS. [*From the doorway.*] Mind you keep the coverlet wrapped round you!

[*Exit Widow reluctantly. The sound of her key locking the door is distinctly heard.* TONY *waves his hand to her as she passes his window, and she throws him a kiss. He sits staring out into the street. Presently steps are heard on the pavement, and the sound of a cane tapping.*

TONY. [*Listening.*] Oh, someone's coming—someone with a cane. I can hear it tap-tapping.

[*He leans out to stop the passer-by, who, as we see him through the window, proves to be a tall, portly, middle-aged gentleman of fifty or more, dressed in a beautiful blue coat with wide capes, a green vest over which a gold watchchain is draped conspicuously, and a high hat. His air is commanding, and he starts sharply as the little boy accosts him.*

TONY. What a beautiful cane! And the sun shining on its gold top! [*Remembering his manners.*] Good-day to you, sir.

GENTLEMAN. [*Annoyed.*] Good-day, yourself.

TONY. Won't you come in and play with me? I'm all by myself, no one will disturb us.

GENTLEMAN. Most extraordinary young rascal! Do you think I can stop and chat with every impudent little boy I meet? Indeed, no, I have a great deal of business on hand! [*He starts to move on.*]

TONY. What do you have to do?

GENTLEMAN. [*Not entirely without pride.*] I have to settle my accounts.

TONY. What does that mean?

GENTLEMAN. Well, counting my money for one thing. That takes a long time let me tell you!

TONY. You must have a lot of money—as much as two pounds?

GENTLEMAN. [*Backing away.*] Two pounds? *Two pounds,* indeed! Two thousand, and more——

TONY. How did you find it all?

GENTLEMAN. I didn't *find* it. I worked for it—worked hard all day long. [*Shaking his cane emphatically.*] When the lazy fellows were out dancing on the green, or lying on their backs in the meadows, *I* stayed indoors and added long columns of figures, and now, when they have hardly a copper in their pockets, I have nothing to do but count my money! [*He moves away.*]

TONY. Please come in and play.

GENTLEMAN. Certainly not! God bless my soul, I have other things to do! [*He turns to go.*]

TONY. Your—your soul? Why, that wouldn't be busy counting the money, too, would it?

GENTLEMAN. God bless my soul, is the boy crazy? [*Turning on his heel, and laughing skeptically.*] I don't possess such a thing!

TONY. Oh, but you do. You said so twice—you said [*Imitating him.*], "God bless my soul."

GENTLEMAN. That was merely an ejaculation.

TONY. I never heard of an ejac— an ejac—, but mother says everyone has a soul.

GENTLEMAN. Rubbish!

TONY. [*Leaning forward with both hands on the sill.*] Oh, if you only would—you won't be using it, you know!

GENTLEMAN. [*Pounding his cane impatiently.*] Rubbish, I said, rubbish!

TONY [*Putting his hand out to detain him.*] I'll promise not to keep it long.

GENTLEMAN. [*Is about to push the hand aside, then seeing* TONY'S *face he pauses and speaks grudgingly in order to get away.*] Well, yes, yes, yes, then, but I say frankly I don't know what you mean by all this, and what's more, I don't believe you do, either! [*Turning with an impatient jerk, and a puzzled shrug of the shoulders.*] Good-day to you.

TONY. [*Calling after him.*] Good-bye.

[*The* GENTLEMAN *passes on up the street, grumbling, thumping his cane and flapping his handkerchief in annoyance. As he disappears from sight a feeble little cough sounds outside, the door is pushed slowly open, and a little man in dilapidated garments pauses timidly on the threshold. He shuffles in uncertainly, an undersized, underfed, moth-eaten specimen. In his tattered garments he is a ludicrous and half fearful sight. His clothes must, at one time, have resembled the Middle-Aged* GENTLEMAN'S, *but they have fallen into decay; his coat is in rags, the tails of it trail behind him forlornly, and one bare toe protrudes pathetically from his worn shoes. For a moment* TONY *is half afraid of him.*

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. [*Querulously.*] Well? [*Tony is still too nonplussed to reply.*] [GENTLEMAN'S SOUL, *watching him anxiously.*] What are you going to do with me? [*Triumphantly.*] I've got away from him anyway!

TONY. I say, you don't belong to the gentleman who just passed by? The one who has all that money?

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. [*In a thin, complaining whine.*]

I should say I do, and if ever a soul had a stingy, cross, cantankerous——

TONY. But you can't be *his* Soul! He was big, and he carried the most beautiful cane with a gold top, and you—why, you're all in rags and tags like a beggar. You're so little and twisted, your knees knock together, and you're very pale!

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. [*In a plaintive whine.*] Well, whose fault is it if I'm not handsome? I can't help that!

TONY. I'm sorry, but you did surprise me so! Won't you sit down?

[*The* GENTLEMAN'S SOUL *seats himself gingerly, in order not to tear his very tender garments, on a chair. He huddles his knees close together in an effort to hide his rags, tries to smooth his few wild, straggling locks of hair, and wheezes a little, his breath being short.*

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. Oh, you don't know the suffering I undergo with that man! Why, you'd scarcely believe it, but he hasn't given me anything to eat for days. Consequently, my whole system is in a state of collapse. If you hadn't happened to invite me in to-day, I think, I really think, I couldn't have kept on being *his* Soul any longer!

TONY. It must be very hard. Can't you make him do anything for you?

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. [*Drawing his chair nearer* TONY.] I used to try—when we were younger—before I got in this run-down condition, but he was always thinking of his investments—whether to buy this, or sell that, and adding up one column and then down it again! Even in my younger and healthier days, I couldn't distract him, and now— [*He sobs brokenly, and waves his hands in feeble protest.*]

TONY. [*Still puzzled by his strange attire.*] And your clothes aren't a bit like his!

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. I guess I know that! If you had to wear them, you'd realize what I endure! [*Pointing to his decadent trousers.*] When they first began to get shabby, I begged him to make me some new ones, but instead he began patching them—see! [*Displaying several faded patches.*] That was bad enough, but now he hasn't touched them for so long they're all worn out. I shall be indecent soon! [*His voice breaks pathetically.*]

TONY. I'm so sorry. Can't we make him do something? Doesn't he ever notice you? [GENTLEMAN'S SOUL *shakes his head dolefully.*]

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. Never! I'm going into a decline. [*He coughs consumptively, thumping his chest.*] All for lack of food and clothes, and—and encouragement!

TONY. [*Affected by seeing him so completely unmanned.*] You wouldn't be so bad if you could just *grow* a little.

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. Ye-es, but I'm getting thinner and weaker every day.

TONY. [*Struck with a bright idea.*] If you got bigger and stronger than he is—then he'd *have* to notice you!

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. Oh—oh, when he was a boy we were just the same size and we had the pleasantest times together. That was before he took to making money.

TONY. What did you do?

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. He let me show him things out of doors—squirrels playing in and out of the branches [*He tries feebly to imitate their caperings and the result is pathetic.*], and the silk inside chestnut burrs, and pictures in the frost at the roadsides. We could always tell stories, too—not on paper, you know, but here [*Tapping his forehead meaningly*]. Oh, those were delightful days!

TONY. [*Enraptured, repeating his former thought.*] Now if you grew to be his size, you and he could be like that again.

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. What's the use? [*In an abandonment of woe.*] Look at me!

TONY. [*Perplexed.*] There ought to be some way. There's Doctors—they make people well—they give them pills to take. [*At the word "pills," he catches his breath, and glances at the bottle on the shelf.*]

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. Well, a lot of good that does me, when I haven't any pills.

TONY. [*Pointing eagerly to the shelf.*] But I have! I have a pill that makes people big and strong—

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. [*Beating his hands together in tremulous excitement.*] Are you sure?

TONY. [*Nodding.*] Mother told me it would. You'll grow so tall that at night you'll be able to reach up and pick the stars that have caught in the branches of trees! Oh, I'm glad I remembered. [*Pointing to the shelf.*] You'll have to climb on a chair to reach them—there in that glass bottle.

[*With difficulty the* GENTLEMAN'S SOUL *drags over a chair, clambers on it feebly, and brings the bottle to* TONY.

TONY. A red one she said. [*Taking it out.*] Yes, here it is!

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. [*Taking it in his hand and scrutinizing it.*] You're a very kind little boy.

TONY. You're welcome to the pill, and thank you for playing with me.

GENTLEMAN'S SOUL. [*Bowing shakily.*] Perhaps, when I've got my growth, and he's all nicely trained again, we'll be coming to pay you our respects.

TONY. Good-bye.

[*The* Gentleman's Soul *has scarcely gone out, clasping the pill in his hand, and the sound of his little cough has hardly died away, when a buzzing noise sounds nearby, mingled with the cry: "Knives to grind. Scissors to grind." This grows louder and* Tony, *alert in an instant, leans out the window.* A Scissors Grinder *appears, a lean, bent fellow, doubled over from the weight of his machine. His face is cracked and brown, with small black eyes; he wears a worn leather apron, a gay handkerchief round his throat, and a battered cap pulled over his forehead.*

Scissors Grinder. Knives to grind. Scissors to grind. Bring out your knives and scissors! [*He stops by the boy and adds enticingly.*] Make 'em nice and sharp for you! [*He swings his machine to the ground and starts it.*]

Tony. [*Smiling.*] Good-day to you. What a funny wheel. It goes so fast! I wish I could make things all sharp and shiny! Oh, Mr. Scissors Grinder, couldn't you come in and see me?

Scissors Grinder. Do you think I can waste time where there's nothing for me to do? I must be moving on hunting for knives and scissors to grind.

Tony. It must be fine to see so many places!

Scissors Grinder. It's not so bad jogging along out in the country, but—[*Making a grimace at the houses across the way.*] there are too many houses here, and the pavements are hot and hard—hard on shoe leather too! [*He taps his foot sadly.*]

Tony. But there's lots of people here, and they've all got knives and scissors.

Scissors Grinder. They don't make *friends* of their knives and scissors—just throw 'em away when the blades

get dull! Well, if you haven't anything for me to sharpen, I must find someone who has!

TONY. [*Quickly.*] If you're so busy grinding, couldn't you let your Soul come in and play with me?

SCISSORS GRINDER. [*Leaning in and scrutinizing him.*] Why, I'm nothing but a tramp, without a whole shirt to my back, or a piece of silver in my pockets!

TONY. Oh, that doesn't matter.

SCISSORS GRINDER. You're the strangest fellow I ever met! [*Entering into the game.*] My Soul! That's hardly my line of trade— [*Winking good-naturedly.*] not much call for it, you know!

TONY. Oh, but you're going to?

SCISSORS GRINDER. [*Assuming a businesslike air.*] Yes, to be sure. Now who shall I say wants it?

TONY. Tony Sims, if you please.

SCISSORS GRINDER. Well, Tony Sims, where would you like it put, sir? [*He reaches his arms in at the window as if they contained something.*] A trifle bulky he is, you know!

TONY. Oh, put him in here, please!

SCISSORS GRINDER. Perhaps he'd best choose his own place. [*He shakes his head and pretends to take the Soul out again.*] He's a strong-minded Soul, I warn you, sir, quite unmanageable at times, and who knows that better than I do? [*He gives* TONY *a grin and a friendly wink, and goes up the street, clanging his bell and calling.*] Knives to grind. Scissors to grind. Bring out your knives and scissors!

[TONY *watches the street hopefully, but almost before the* SCISSORS GRINDER *has gone, the door of the corner-cupboard, behind* TONY, *swings open, and a man bounds in, whistling. He is tall, nearly twice his master's size, neither very young*

nor very old; his face is jolly and brown, with twinkling gray eyes, a merrily puckered mouth and a pointed chin. His costume is made out of patches of gay-colored cloth, like a jester's; on its long, fantastic points hang small silver bells which make a tinkling accompaniment to his movements. Upon seeing TONY, *he makes a low bow with his hand to his heart.* TONY *regards him in wonder.*

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Laughing at* TONY'S *expression.*] Well, my fine gentleman, what's the matter with me?

TONY. [*Hastily recovering himself.*] Nothing—that is, I mean, I'd no idea you'd be like this!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. 'T is a bit of a surprise at first—shock, I might almost say! Honestly, though, I'm not so bad.

TONY. I should say not!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. Of course, my suit is rather striking, but you see there were two kinds of material to start with [*Holding out the tails of his jacket, and pointing to the yellow and black.*], some bright and some dark, and so, since neither was enough for a whole dress, I put first a patch of yellow and then a piece of black. That was my idea, and don't you like the effect? [*He turns about so* TONY *may see it from every angle.*]

TONY. It's beautiful, and your bells sound the way birds do very early in the morning. Where did you get them?

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Perching himself on the edge of the table and swinging his legs to and fro.*] Whenever I make somebody laugh I can have one. They're not so easy to get as you'd think, when Souls so seldom have a chance to show themselves. Not that I've any

objection to my master, though once in awhile he does get in my way! On the whole we're very happy together.

TONY. [*Studying him.*] You're much taller than he!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Laughing.*] I should say I am! [*He suddenly adds to his height by standing on the table.*] I tell him I may be outgrowing him one of these days!

TONY. Your bells shine so!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Leaping down from the table and across the room.*] That's because I polish them every night with the sunlight I catch during the day.

TONY. [*In surprise.*] Sunlight?

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. Oh, sometimes I use bits of star-dust that have strayed down here. It's a little harder to find, but it keeps them brighter.

TONY. I've often tried to take hold of sunshine, but it was so slippery!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. Yes, I know.

TONY. And I never saw any star-dust at all. Where do you find it?

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Confidentially.*] In all sorts of places: on window sills; behind shutters; in flower pots; and once, I found some in an ash-barrel in the crookedest alley that ever you saw!

TONY. Do you suppose I could ever find any?

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. Perhaps, but you have to learn how.

TONY. How?

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. It's quite an art. You must really always be on the lookout for it, but you mustn't ever seem to be!

TONY. I'm going to try. [*Thoughtfully.*] Do you like being a Scissors Grinder's Soul?

Scissors Grinder's Soul. I wouldn't belong to anyone else! We're such friends.

Tony. [*Hesitating.*] But he—he wasn't like you?

Scissors Grinder's Soul. Of course, we are different, but variety, you know—spice o' life and all that! When he goes out with his machine strapped on his back, I run ahead—up all the hills—

Tony. What do you do that for?

Scissors Grinder's Soul. [*Laughing.*] Why to see what's on the other side, of course!

Tony. And then what?

Scissor's Grinder's Soul. Oh, then, I look for another hill to climb!

Tony. Aren't you ever tired?

Scissors Grinder's Soul. I should say not! Besides, I have other things to do. Whenever I go by an orchard, I must blow on the apples. People wonder and wonder what makes them so red! In the farmhouses where there are little boys and girls, I take care to give the trees a shake, so the children will find plenty on the ground. They never guess who makes the apples fall!

Tony. But I know now! And what does your master do?

Scissors Grinder's Soul. Oh, he laughs at the things I tell him. Sometimes I make him songs from the things I see, and he hears them all the time he's grinding people's knives and scissors.

Tony. Won't you sing me one?

Scissors Grinder's Soul. You heard him when he passed just now; what was he singing?

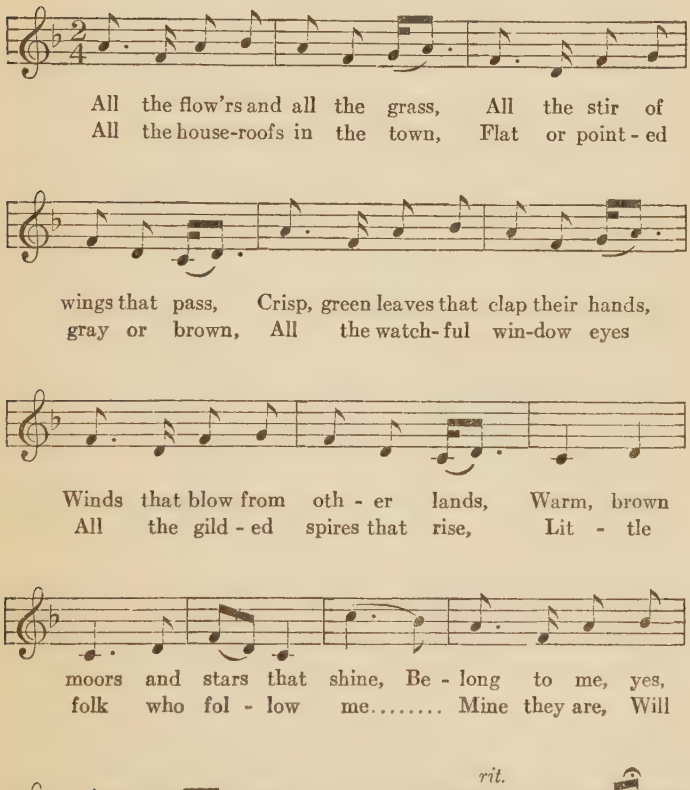
Tony. I didn't hear him sing anything. He just called out [*Imitating him.*], "Knives to grind. Scissors to grind." Just like that!

Scissors Grinder's Soul. Oh, you couldn't tell that

inside he was really singing a song—my song! I'll show you what he sang!

THE SCISSORS GRINDER'S SONG

Arranged by CHARLES ROEPPER


All the flow'rs and all the grass, All the stir of
All the house-roofs in the town, Flat or point-ed
wings that pass, Crisp, green leaves that clap their hands,
gray or brown, All the watch-ful win-dow eyes
Winds that blow from oth-er lands, Warm, brown
All the gild-ed spires that rise, Lit-tle
moors and stars that shine, Be-long to me, yes,
folk who fol-low me..... Mine they are, Will
rit.
each is mine, On the roads I trav-el O!
al-ways be On the streets I trav-el O!

The Scissors Grinder's Song

All the flowers and all the grass,
All the stir of wings that pass,
Crisp, green leaves that clap their hands,
Winds that blow from other lands,
Warm, brown moors and stars that shine,
Belong to me, yes, each is mine,—
On the streets I travel-O![1]

All the house-roofs in the town
Flat or pointed, gray or brown,
All the watchful window-eyes,
All the gilded spires that rise,
Little folk who follow me,—
Mine they are,—Will always be,
On the streets I travel-O![1]

TONY. [*Clapping his hands.*] Sing me another, do!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Leaning against the wall, and pressing his hands to his head.*] Not—just now.

TONY. What's the matter?

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*With an effort.*] Nothing much.

TONY. Have you got a pain?

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. It's just my head—that's always aching.

TONY. I'm so sorry. Why, I didn't think Souls ever had headache.

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Coming to him apologetically.*] I never did in my younger days, but just lately the constant z-z-z of the machine grinding the steel blades has, well, got inside my head, and I can't get it out.

TONY. But I thought the best part about being a soul

[1] The music for this song is given on page 51.

was that you didn't have to stay with your master all the time! Anyway you don't have to grind things just because he does!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. You're right about that, but even Souls forget sometimes! Once I let myself listen to nothing but the grinding, and then some of that buzzing got into my head, and there it stays. Serves me right, I suppose, but it is unpleasant. [*He rubs his head ruefully.*]

TONY. [*Leaning forward and holding out the bottle.*] It's lucky you told me—look here!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Taking his head out of his hands.*] What's that?

TONY. Just the thing to cure you. See that yellow pill; it will take all the ache out of your head!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Springing up.*] If I thought it really would!

TONY. It will; the doctor said so. [*He holds it out and the* SOUL *approaches.*]

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. But you've only got two! [*He draws back.*] I say, you'd better keep it!

TONY. No, you take it. I guess I don't need it so very much. Besides, there's one left!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Taking the pill.*] I'll make you the happiest song anyone ever heard!

TONY. Oh, Mr. Scissors Grinder's Soul, thank you for playing with me. I loved your song, and I'm going to look for star-dust everywhere!

SCISSORS GRINDER'S SOUL. [*Kneeling by* TONY *and taking both his hands.*] Oh, I should be thanking you, little boy. When my head is clear again, I shall make a new song, and my master and I will come and sing it to you! [*He shakes his bells and runs joyfully out.*]

TONY. [*Calling after him*] Goodbye.

[*Tony sings softly to himself, "On the roads I*

travel O." Soon steps are heard drawing near, and a woman, heavy and poorly dressed, comes by. She carries a tall brush and a bucket on her arm. Her skin is coarse and yellow, and her features thick and blunted. As she shuffles by, Tony hails her.

TONY. Good-day to you.

WOMAN. Good-day to you.

TONY. Where are you going?

WOMAN. To my work.

TONY. What do you do?

WOMAN. Oh, sometimes I scrub people's floors, and clean their windows, or wash their clothes. [*Indicating her brush*] I've got to scrub to-day.

TONY. That's pretty hard work on a hot day like this!

WOMAN [*leaning on the sill*] It is, indeed—down on my knees slopping soapy water over the floors, and then rubbing it off again! But [*sighing*] when you've done it as many years as I have you get used to it!

TONY. I wish you'd stay here with me instead!

WOMAN. Dear me, boy, do you think I've got time to waste in foolish talk? I've got my work to do, else where'd I get the money to buy my bread and tea? [*She moves away.*]

TONY [*quickly*] You'll send your Soul anyway, won't you?

WOMAN [*coming back with her hand to her ear*] What was that you said? I must be losing my hearing!

TONY. Your Soul—

WOMAN [*incredulously*] Wants my Soul, does he?

TONY. If you please.

WOMAN [*chuckling*] Indeed, if that's all you want, you're welcome to it! Only don't be forgetting to send it back to me! Good-day to you!

[*She goes off, the flapping sound of her shoes echoing as she passes up the street. Tony looks hopefully towards the door, but it does not open. Instead, out of the washtub steps a small figure dressed in soft and fluttering green. This little person dances about on the tips of her toes, her green garments catching the light and shimmering. She advances towards Tony, who gazes at her speechless. She resembles a fairy, perhaps a distant relative of the Irish Lepracauns, so small and dainty is she, with a green cap on her head like a flower turned upside down, and little white hands that seem to have a language all their own.*

TONY [*gasping*] You—you aren't hers?

WOMAN'S SOUL [*laughing with a sound such as you may have heard when you have put your ear close to harebells*] Yes, I am, don't you like me? [*She makes him a pirouette and curtsy.*]

TONY [*recovering himself*] Why, why I think you're the most beautiful Soul I've ever seen!

[*The Woman's Soul blows him a kiss as she takes gay little runs about the room.*

TONY. No one would ever have thought you belonged to her!

WOMAN'S SOUL. That's the delightful part about Souls—people can never tell what we are like!

TONY. I'm sure she can't dance—her feet were so big, and in such queer, flapping shoes!

WOMAN'S SOUL. Of course she can't! She hasn't got dancing feet; hers are much too clumsy. But she's got a dancing Soul—that's me—and I'm far more satisfactory! When she's down on her knees on those wet floors, or scrubbing the dirty clothes, [*Here she illustrates the*

process] she just has to call and I come and dance for her!

TONY. How she must love you!

WOMAN'S SOUL. She says she couldn't live without me! I leave her sometimes, though never for very long!

TONY. Where do you go then?

WOMAN'S SOUL. Oh, I go back to visit the place where she lived when I first came to be her Soul—far away, over the great green hills where the pastures go down to the sea.

TONY. I saw the sea once from a high window. Oh, I'd like to visit that country! What do you do there?

WOMAN'S SOUL. First, I kiss the tips of all the little fir trees, to make them grow, and I find the tiny fairy houses she and I built once. Then I run and skip in the dew, and I hunt for little yellow mushrooms. They are really gold buttons if people only knew and wouldn't swallow them!

TONY. I'll remember not to!

WOMAN'S SOUL. Sometimes I lie down by little slate-gray pools hidden among tall grasses, and I push the grass aside, so the sky can reach those little pools and make them blue again. [*She lies down and shows him how she does all this.*]

TONY. Are there any people there?

WOMAN'S SOUL. I was just coming to them. There's a small village higher up above the downs, where she used to live. I go there sometimes, and then I can tell her what all the people she knew are doing: how Phillip's and Kate's rose-bush has climbed to their roof; how Dick and Molly have a new, blue-eyed baby to sleep in the little yellow cradle by the doorway; how Nancy keeps on gathering herbs for the sick ones; and old Peter still sits on his bench watching for the herring to come back

to his weirs. [*The Woman's Soul turns away, rubbing her eyes as if they hurt her.*]

TONY. What's the matter? You're not crying, are you?

WOMAN'S SOUL. [*shaking her head*] My eyes hurt me; that's all.

TONY. Is it because the day's so warm, or because you're staying here instead of going to her country?

WOMAN'S SOUL. No, they're always aching.

TONY. But what makes them?

WOMAN'S SOUL [*hurriedly, ashamed to confess it*] Well, you see, once when she was scrubbing floors, she asked me to dance for her, but I felt lazy and wouldn't. Then some of the soapsuds flew in my eyes, and I can never wash them all out!

TONY. That's too bad, I don't like to see your eyes get all red, and the soap must make them smart.

WOMAN'S SOUL [*rubbing them*] It does!

TONY [*picking up the bottle and eying the remaining pill doubtfully*] Maybe the pain'll go away.

WOMAN'S SOUL. Oh, you don't know those soapsuds—they're in to stay!

TONY. Do they hurt a whole lot?

[*The Woman's Soul nods and Tony gives a last look at the pill.*

TONY [*slowly*] I've got a pill that would take the pain right out.

WOMAN'S SOUL [*rising quickly*] Do you mean that?

TONY [*holding it out*] My mother brought it to me—here it is. [*With an effort*] You—you can have it.

WOMAN'S SOUL [*bending over him, and seeing the empty bottle*] But you haven't any more—I couldn't take your last!

TONY [*thrusting it in her hand*] No, you take it. Perhaps I'll get another!

WOMAN'S SOUL [*kissing him*] I'll never forget what you have done, and the next time I go to the country over the hills, I shall bring you back a whole bunch of harebells full of dew!

[*She disappears into the tub.—Tony looks apprehensively at the empty bottle. Soon his mother goes by, unlocks the door and comes in. She goes to Tony, feeling of his head and hands.*

WIDOW SIMS. Did you go to sleep the time I was gone?

TONY [*chuckling at the remembrance*] I should say not! I had such a lot to do.

WIDOW SIMS [*taking off her bonnet*] Why whatever do you mean, Tony?

TONY. All the ones who came in to play with me.

WIDOW SIMS. Came right in, did they, when I locked the door myself? 'T was only dreams came in to you!

TONY [*firmly, pointing to the chair and table*] They sat right there.

WIDOW SIMS [*shaking her head*] Then it's high time you took the first pill. [*She goes to the shelf, and gives a start at not finding it. Then she searches more thoroughly.*] I'd have sworn I put it here with my own hands. Tony, you've not seen the bottle the Doctor gave me?

TONY [*guiltily*] Here it is, mother.

WIDOW SIMS [*stands back mystified, looking from Tony to the shelf in bewilderment*] He couldn't have reached it, not even on a chair, he's that weak. Queer what tricks things'll play on a body! [*Going to Tony*] Come, dear, give it to me. [*She takes up the bottle, stares at it, giving it a shake to be sure it is really empty.*] They're

gone— [*Crying out*] Tony, Tony, what have you done with them?

TONY [*nervously*] I—I—

WIDOW SIMS. You never were one to meddle or play tricks—have you hid them or swallowed—

TONY [*simply*] I gave them away to three friends of mine.

[*The Widow looks at him for a moment, speechless, then she sits down heavily on a chair, covering her face with her apron.*

WIDOW SIMS [*weeping*] Tony, Tony, what is it you're saying?

TONY. I'm sorry, but they did need them.

WIDOW SIMS. What have you done? They would'a cured you of the fever. It'll be burning you all up now, and where'll I ever get another two pounds to buy you more? Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do? [*She begins to sob despairingly.*]

TONY. I don't mind, mother, and you should have seen how grateful they were!

WIDOW SIMS. There he goes again; oh, deary me, what's to become of him now? [*Tony looks distressed, then his face brightens as he hears in the distance the Scissors Grinder's cry. It is more a happy chant than before and swells to a kind of paean of happiness.*]

SCISSORS GRINDER. Knives to grind. Scissors to grind.

TONY [*leaning out to listen*] Do you hear that, mother? [*She pays no heed.*]

SCISSORS GRINDER [*nearer*] Knives to grind. Scissors to grind.

TONY. Listen, he's singing his thanks for the pill!

SCISSORS GRINDER [*still nearer*] Knives to grind. Scissors to grind.

TONY [*delightedly*] I knew it would cure his headache!

Scissors Grinder [*still nearer and triumphant*] Bring out your knives and scissors!

Tony. Oh, mother, isn't it a fine song?

Widow Sims [*wringing her hands*] Whatever do you mean, Tony? I can't hear a thing but that old Scissor Grinder's ugly noise! [*Scissors Grinder's voice, more distantly*] Knives to grind. Scissors to grind.

Tony. But you're not listening. He said he'd make me the happiest song he could, but I never thought he'd be well so soon!

Scissors Grinder [*nearer*] Knives to grind. Scissors to grind. Bring out your knives and scissors!

[*Tony listens till the cry dies away. Widow Sims rises, and goes to Tony, taking his face between her hands. Then she moves to the table, sobbing, and tries to go on with her work. Tony watches her. Suddenly the Scrub Woman appears at the window, a bunch of flowers in her hands. These she thrusts in front of Tony.*

Tony. Oh, I know where they came from! They grew in your country over the hills in the pastures by the sea!

Woman. What a queer boy! How did you guess?

Tony. Did you think I'd forget so soon?

Woman [*to the Widow Sims*] My sister sent them to me from my old home. I've brought some for your little boy.

Tony. Here is a harebell. I knew she'd bring me one!

Widow Sims. You're very kind to him. Thank her for them, Tony.

Tony. And there is, there is, a drop of dew on it!

Widow Sims [*to the Woman*] Talks like that all day, he does.

WOMAN. Well, now but suppose that was just a drop from my soapsuds?

TONY. Oh, I know better than that! *She* said it would be full of dew!

WIDOW SIMS. Just listen to him, will you?

TONY. I'm glad the pill took the pain out of her eyes. Now she can go back to your country, and dance for you all the time, and her eyes won't ever smart any more!

WOMAN [*turning to go*] Well, I hope you'll be feeling better in the morning. [*To the Widow*] Queer how the fever makes them act. [*She goes up the street.*]

TONY [*fondling the harebell*] See, mother, it can dance just the way her Soul did!

[*At this the Widow sobs afresh, burying her face in her apron. Just as her wailing grows loud, the noise of a cane tap-tapping sounds on the pavement, and the Gentleman in the blue coat and high hat comes by.*

TONY [*calling to him*] I hope he's grown very tall by now.

GENTLEMAN [*starting and coming to the window*] God bless my soul!

TONY. You will play with him somethimes, and not count your money all the time? [*At this the Widow cries more loudly.*]

GENTLEMAN [*thumping his cane*] What's all this noise? I never heard such a racket!

WIDOW SIMS. They're lost, lo-st—

GENTLEMAN. What's lost? Speak up, woman.

WIDOW SIMS. Some pills, sir.

TONY. They're not lost. I gave them away. Your Soul took one himself, don't you remember?

GENTLEMAN [*to the Widow*] Don't blubber so! Is that boy crazy?

WIDOW SIMS. No sir, it's the fever makes him talk so. [*Beginning to sob again.*] The pills would'a cured him; now he'll die of the fever. Oh, what shall I do-o—

GENTLEMAN. Rubbish! [*Thumping his cane and addressing the Widow*] Go to the Doctor's for more of those confounded pills. And—*STOP THAT NOISE!*

WIDOW SIMS. I've got no more money.

GENTLEMAN. You're a lazy, good-for-nothing, thriftless—

WIDOW SIMS. Oh, no, sir, I work hard all day, but I'm a poor widow.

[*The Gentleman turns on his heel, tries to go away, and then wheels about. Fumbling in his pocket, he awkwardly draws out some money which he lays on the window-sill.*

GENTLEMAN. There, take that—and for Heaven's sake—*STOP THAT RACKET!* [*He stumps off, muttering. The Widow hurries to the window and leans out, calling after him.*]

WIDOW. Oh, thank you, sir! God bless you, sir! [*Dropping on her knees by Tony*] Tony, Tony, now I can buy you three more pills!

TONY [*smiling to himself*] His Soul must have grown *very big!*

CURTAIN

COLUMBINE IN BUSINESS

* A Modern Harlequinade in One Act

CHARACTERS

MISS COLUMBINE, *a stenographer*
MR. HARLEQUIN, *an office boy*
MR. PANTALOON, *a soap manufacturer*
MR. SCAPINO, *a travelling salesman*

All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union, by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. Moving Picture rights reserved.

Attention is called to the penalties provided by law for any infringements of the dramatist's rights, as follows:

"Sec. 4966:—Any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition for which copyright has been obtained, without the consent of the proprietor of said dramatic or musical composition, or his heirs and assigns, shall be liable for damages therefor, such damages in all cases to be assessed at such sum, not less that one hundred dollars for the first and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance, as to the court shall appear to be just. If the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, such person or persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year."—U. S. Revised Statutes, Title 60, Chap. 3.

COLUMBINE IN BUSINESS

Prologue

Before the curtain rises, Harlequin enters from the right side of the curtain, and looks anxiously around, as if in search for someone. At the same moment Columbine peeps from the left side, and then comes running over to him. They meet in the centre of the stage and clasp hands.

HARLEQUIN. [*With relief.*]

Oh, *there* you are!

COLUMBINE. [*Saucily.*]

Of course I am, my dear.
You seem surprised—why *wouldn't* I be here?

HARLEQUIN. [*Gesturing towards audience.*]

Because a silly fellow out there said—
It frightened me—that Columbine was dead!

COLUMBINE. [*Indignantly.*]

What, me? How dared he? I can tell him this
I'm dead when lovers care no more to kiss
And slip away to meet beneath the moon——

HARLEQUIN. [*Reminiscently.*]

How we *did* use to fool old Pantaloon!

COLUMBINE. [*With relish.*]

And how he'd rage around and snort and blow!

HARLEQUIN.

He must have died five centuries ago.

COLUMBINE. [*Confidently.*]

Oh, he's dead ages since—the world today

Won't let such surly fellows block the way.

HARLEQUIN.

Oh, well he's no great loss. I never thought
The crusty old bird any kind of sport——

PANTALOON. [*Emerging from centre of curtains.*]

You didn't, Sir? You shallow, brainless boy!
You jumping jack! You idle dancing toy!
I'll have you know it's solid men like me
Who make your bread and butter——

HARLEQUIN. [*Impudently.*]

Toast and tea
And marmalade and sausages and pie.
We thank you deeply, Columbine and I!

PANTALOON. [*Fuming.*]

Be still, Sirrah, who wants to hear from you?
Why don't you get some honest work to do?

COLUMBINE.

Oh, my, he's awful in a rage;

PANTALOON

Vain girl! Don't think that you can run the age!
For if we didn't watch you day and night
You'd blow the world up——

HARLEQUIN.

Come, Sir, this is trite
This carping criticism of the young,
The same old story [*Aside.*] on the same old tongue!

PANTALOON. [*Withdrawing.*]

I'm through.

COLUMBINE. [*Sighing, as he goes.*]

Oh, dear, to think he's with us yet!

HARLEQUIN.

Oh, well, its very easy to forget
Old Pantaloon as long as I have you.

COLUMBINE.

There's someone else I miss, I wonder who?

HARLEQUIN. [*Indignantly.*]

Not Scappy?

COLUMBINE. [*Brightening.*]

Yes, Scapino, I declare,
I wonder if he's round?

HARLEQUIN.

He wouldn't dare
Be here when I'm here. You don't miss that beast?

COLUMBINE. [*Hastily.*]

Oh, no, of course I don't—but—well, at least
He gave a thrill to life, I will say that!
With only one man 'round it's rather flat.

HARLEQUIN.

Scapino is a wretch, I'd have you know
He wouldn't dare come near you!

SCAPINO. [*Entering between them.*]

Is that so?

COLUMBINE.

Oh, mercy, here he is!

SCAPINO. [*Suavely.*]

Dear Columbine,
Still young and lovely——

HARLEQUIN. [*Firmly.*]

Sir, she's mine!

SCAPINO.

She's mine!

HARLEQUIN.

You always tried to win her, but my friend,
She always saw your falseness in the end.

SCAPINO.

Oh, that was in the days of long ago,
But she's a modern woman, now you know!

I rather think you're in for a surprise.

COLUMBINE. [*Tugging at* HARLEQUIN.]

Come quick, I think the curtain's going to rise!

HARLEQUIN. [*Hanging back.*]

She'll stick to me!

SCAPINO. [*Insolently.*]

You think so? In the days
Of shows and dancing halls and cabarets?

HARLEQUIN. [*Going out after* COLUMBINE.]

She will!

SCAPINO. [*Following.*]

Poor foolish boy! He doesn't know
They're not the way they were an age ago!

The curtain remains down a moment then it rises on the play itself. Throughout the prologue and the play the characters all wear the costumes of early Italian pantomime:—fluffy, short skirted COLUMBINE; *slim* HARLEQUIN *in his tight fitting suit of gay patches;* PANTALOON *with his tufts of hair and his baggy clothes; and* SCAPINO, *in black, the traditional pantomime villain.*

TIME: *To-day.*

SCENE: *A dingy little New York office on a spring morning. Door right leads to outer office. Door back centre to corridor. Window left, showing glimpse of high office buildings. Typewriter desk and chair well down centre left. A larger desk and chair at right, another chair drawn up by it. Hat rack and files back. Several cheap colored prints of soap advertisements on walls, a clock.*

Stage is empty when curtain rises but the telephone on desk left is ringing continuously. Door back opens and COLUMBINE *enters quickly. She wears the conventional dress of the* COLUMBINE *of early pantomime, and has a red cape about her shoulders. She answers the telephone a little breathlessly in a voice that has the familiar nasal twang of a city shop girl or stenographer. She is about eighteen, fair and pretty with curled bobbed hair, a dash of makeup, and all the gay little feminine ways that* COLUMBINES *have always worn—to-day, yesterday and the day before that.*

COLUMBINE. [*At the telephone.*] Hello, yes, this is Mr. Pantaloon's office. No, he's not in yet. Yeh, I'm his secretary. [*With a sharp change of tone.*] Say, who do you want anyway? [*Then with a smile.*] Oh, it's you, Scappy—what'd you keep me guessin' for like that? Do I remember about last night? Well, I'll say I do, some jazz up to Reizenberger's. [*She laughs a little nervously.*] Didn't I hate to hear the alarm go off at seven thoity. [*A pause and it is evident from her face that she is somewhat upset by what the person at the other end of the wire is saying, for she answers quickly.*] My Gawd, Scappy, you ain't startin' in on that line again are you? Didn't I have trouble enough makin' you behave yesterday? [*Slowly and with a little note of alarm in her voice.*] Sure, I remember what you said last night, but that ain't this morning is it? [*Pause.*] Sure, I'm as good a sport as anybody, but I couldn't go off on a spree like that. [*Another pause.*] No, 'twouldn't make any difference how long it lasted. [*Another pause.*] Well, I can't help it when your train leaves. Cut it out, Scappy—— [*There is a sound from*

outer office, and she looks hastily toward door.] Somebody's coming, I can't stand here listening to you—— [*The door right opens, admitting* HARLEQUIN, *as she finishes her conversation hurriedly.*] 'Course I'm tellin' you the truth, that's a nice thing to say to me. Well, thanks for last night, you sure did hand me a swell time—— [*Seeing* HARLEQUIN *she rings up hastily and crosses to hat rack with a preoccupied air, pretending not to see the figure in the doorway. She comes down to the desk after hanging up her cloak, takes out vanity case, and gives her nose a dab of powder. She makes a few pleasant little faces at herself in the mirror, and fluffs out her hair, humming a snatch of popular song. More slowly she gets out notebook and paper, takes off typewriter cover, and fits a sheet in the machine, giving a little sigh as she does so.* HARLEQUIN *comes in, closing door after him. He wears the traditional* HARLEQUIN *costume of brightly colored squares. It fits his slim young figure tightly, and he moves gracefully towards her. His air is a sort of dreamy jauntiness, his face rather pale and sensitive.*]

COLUMBINE. [*Affecting indifference.*] 'Lo, Quinny. [*She goes on typing, first extracting a piece of gum from under her desk, which she chews rhythmically.*] What's the idea of you walkin' in here round ten thoity like a bank president?

HARLEQUIN. [*Suspiciously.*] Well, what's the idea of you givin' me the slip last night. I saw you meet him and get in that taxi.

COLUMBINE. [*On the defensive.*] Well, 'tisn't a crime, is it? I didn't have a date with you.

HARLEQUIN. Suppose you went to Reizenberger's afterwards.

COLUMBINE. [*Shrugging.*] Maybe we did. [*Trying*

to soothe him.] Now don't go and get sore. I got a right to a good feed and some fun once in a while——

HARLEQUIN. Yeh, and that once in a while's always when Scappy's hanging round.

COLUMBINE. If he wants to spend his money giving me a good time—he can!

HARLEQUIN. [*Stubbornly.*] I told you to cut it out the last time he was back.

COLUMBINE. You're jealous if Scappy looks at me.

HARLEQUIN. If he looks at a girl, believe me, it doesn't mean any good to her.

COLUMBINE. [*Irritated.*] Oh, shut up, anybody'd think to hear you I was a calla lily or somethin'. I guess I know what I can get away with——

HARLEQUIN. [*Persuasively.*] Say, now, don't go and get mad, honey! Lord knows, I'd give you the swellest feed and shows in the place if I had the cash.

COLUMBINE. Sure, Quin, I know you're a good spender when you got it.

HARLEQUIN. [*Somewhat mollified.*] Well, I certainly won't weep to see Scappy take to the road this time. It's the coast too this trip. I sure can do without a sight of his sweet mug for six months. Makes me sick, hangin' round my girl——

COLUMBINE. [*Quickly.*] Can that "my girl" stuff, Quin. I got a right to play round with anybody I want to. If you spent half the time worryin' about your job as you do worryin' about me, you'd be sittin' in your private office today, 'stead of being old Pantaloon's thoity a week advertising clerk *and* office boy!

HARLEQUIN. [*Surprised.*] Say, what's the matter with you anyway?

COLUMBINE. [*Softening.*] Look here, Quin, you gotta be more careful. I've worked for the old Boy most two

years and I know him like a book I do, what he'll stand for and what he won't. You're what he won't—forgettin' to punch the time clock every other day, and stayin' out two hours for lunch.

HARLEQUIN. [*Lamely.*] Can't help it in the spring. It kind of gets me!

COLUMBINE. It'll get you fired all right. [*She gives a little sigh.*] Spring gets me that way, too, sometimes, but it ain't safe to let it.

HARLEQUIN. Safe! I don't want to be safe, and you don't either!

COLUMBINE. [*Thoughtfully.*] Well, it's kind of a nice feelin, sometimes, bein' safe—but you do get fed up on it.

HARLEQUIN. I'll say you do! [*He stretches himself gracefully.*] Lord, but I hated to come in to this stuffy old hole, didn't you?

COLUMBINE. I sure did. It was somethin' fierce in the Sub, but when I come out of it and hit Broadway and the sunshine and everybody goin' by in straw hats and new clothes, Gee, I felt like I guess the tulips must when they come up in the Park! [*She laughs a little foolishly at her idea and* HARLEQUIN *joins in.*]

HARLEQUIN. [*Admiringly.*] You're kind of like them, too, kid, with that spunky little baby face of yours!

COLUMBINE. [*Pleased, but protesting.*] Now don't you go and start gettin' poetical about me. Save that for the ad the old Boy wants. He was awful sore you didn't have one ready yesterday.

HARLEQUIN. [*Lightly.*] Oh, I'll fix him up one this morning that'll sell his old soap all right. [*Putting his arm round her affectionately.*] But, listen, Honey, I'm glad you feel like that about the spring. I'm glad it gets you too. [*Fondly.*] We most always do like the same things, how about it?

COLUMBINE. Yes, Quinny, I don't know how I'd get along if it wasn't for you, though Gawd knows it's a wonder I don't get a nervous breakdown the way I have to lie about you to the Boss. Say, Quin, remember what I told you about goin' slow every time I bang the keys real hard. I had to bang 'em most to pieces yesterday when you got fresh with him.

HARLEQUIN. Well, it's lucky he didn't get a noiseless, dearie!

COLUMBINE. You wouldn't be here now, if he had. But you gotta quit talkin' back when I bang hard.

HARLEQUIN. All right, but he gets my goat sometimes.

COLUMBINE. [*Earnestly.*] Oh, Quinny, you'd ought to try and get somewheres in the business.

HARLEQUIN. Guess I don't want to get very far in any old business, not any I've tried working for yet——

COLUMBINE. That's just the trouble with you, Quin.

HARLEQUIN. Well, I can't help it, can I, if that's the way I'm made? As soon as you start to get anywhere the way you say, why you have to stop havin' fun and doin' the things you like, and first thing you know you're old. No, Sir, this bein' young is kind of like a game an' it won't keep.

COLUMBINE. I know, but how about us, and all the things we got planned?

HARLEQUIN. Well, what's the matter with us anyway? We could get married right now, lots of people do.

COLUMBINE. [*Laughing a little ruefully.*] Honest, Quin, I gotta laugh! Get married—us, on your thoity per! Anybody but me would think you're cuckoo!

HARLEQUIN. People are getting married every day without that much. And you can't tell what might happen anyway. You might have a great-uncle die and leave you

a million and I might write a song that they'd sing from here to Frisco——

COLUMBINE. Yeh, and you might never do it, and I haven't got any great-uncle to leave me a cent. Oh, Quin, what's the use of kiddin' ourselves along like that? You've seen our kind get married, an' you know what it's like, some ugly little flat up in the Bronx, an' both of us rushing off in the Sub every morning to an office just like this, an' draggin' home with the crowd at night an' finding the breakfast dishes waiting to be washed—or maybe if there was a kid,—me stayin' home to look after it and wash its things and try and keep it from yellin', and never any money to go any place.

HARLEQUIN. [*Trying to be cheerful.*] Oh, I guess we'd always have enough for the movies.

COLUMBINE. They'd help a lot, seeing Gloria in ermine negligees and me in a bungalow dress that cost one ninety. [*She laughs to hide the break in her voice.*] Do you get it, Quinny, me in a gingham rag like that?

HARLEQUIN. [*Admiringly.*] Why you'd put pep in any old rag you wore, dearie!

COLUMBINE. This being-poor business don't get me, that's all. The trouble is——

HARLEQUIN. [*Cutting her short.*] Now don't begin talking about trouble again! Here it is spring an' most anything might come along—— [*Here there is the sound of a rattly street organ under the window.*] Didn't I say most anything might come along? Well, it's come, right under our windows! [*Columbine smiles in spite of herself.* HARLEQUIN *throws out a coin.*]

HARLEQUIN. There, that ought to keep him going for half an hour.

COLUMBINE. Gee, I hope not, it would be fierce trying

to type to that. [*Reprovingly.*] And there you go wasting your money again!

HARLEQUIN. Oh, well, it's only fair if you like to hear them and I do!

COLUMBINE. [*Swaying a little with the music.*] Some tune, Quinny, look, here's how they're doing it.

[*They begin to dance a very modern bit of jazz, but with the grace and precision a* HARLEQUIN *and a* COLUMBINE *have always shown. They are so absorbed in themselves and the music that they do not see the door centre open, and* MR. PANTALOON *appear in the doorway. He is a round, pompous old man, in the loosely cut clothes of his prototype in the old pantomime. His hair is white and brushed a trifle fantastically; his face is clownishly white. He surveys the pair with angry disapproval, as he does so the battered brief case he carries falling from his hands, and letting spill a number of papers. The sound startles the dancers, who spring guiltily apart.*

PANTALOON. [*Thundering.*] *GOOD MORNING.* [*He fumes fantastically, with many grimaces.*] Oh, don't mind me, go right on, that's what I run my business for, so my stenographer and clerk can practice the latest jazz! Go right on, I'm only your employer and I can wait while you finish!

HARLEQUIN. [*Defending Columbine.*] Why, you see, Mr. Pantaloon, it was just—I mean we didn't expect to do this till the hurdy gurdy came along and we——

PANTALOON. [*Waving him aside.*] That will do, Mr. Harlequin, I don't need any explanations, I've seen you and Miss Columbine up to your tricks before now. [COLUMBINE *is down on the floor now picking up the papers he dropped, and* HARLEQUIN *starts to help her, but* PANTA-

LOON *intervenes.*] Don't stand there like a young calf. Go and stop that infernal rattle box! The police of this city shouldn't allow such nuisances. How they expect business to go on with that racket——

[*He goes over to his desk grumbling, and* HARLEQUIN *leans out of the window signalling to the man to stop the music.* COLUMBINE *brings him the papers, standing by his desk, inwardly nervous, but outwardly spunky.*

COLUMBINE. Shaking a leg once in awhile never hurt any old office.

PANTALOON. [*Throwing out his hands.*] Shaking a leg! Well, I never! I don't know what things are coming to when my secretary talks about shaking legs and does it right in my office! The young people nowadays have——

COLUMBINE. [*Wearily prompting him.*] Degenerated.

PANTALOON. [*Crossly.*] Don't interrupt me. How do you know what I was going to say?

COLUMBINE. Same's you said last time.

PANTALOON. Deteriorated, that's what I was going to say. [*Looking at clock.*] And look at the time, after ten and I find you two hugging and jigging—— [*As* HARLEQUIN *moves away from the window.*] And for Heaven's sake, put down that window! This isn't July, it's April, but I suppose you want me to get pneumonia!

HARLEQUIN. [*Putting it down.*] Don't you like to get a whiff of spring once in awhile, Mr. Pantaloon?

PANTALOON. I do not! There is only one advantage about spring—people clean their houses then and we sell more soap. [*He picks up some sheets on his desk, shaking them at* HARLEQUIN *and frowning fiercely.*] Look at last week's order sheets! They're a disgrace, hardly enough to pay the postage——

HARLEQUIN. [*Pleasantly.*] Maybe not so many people are cleaning house this year!

PANTALOON. [*Banging his fist on his knee.*] Don't get flippant about it, young man. [*Wincing from the blow he has given himself.*] Damn that knee! That's what comes of leaving windows open—starting up my rheumatism again!

COLUMBINE. [*Low and warningly to* HARLEQUIN.] Cut the comedy, Quin, can't you see he's mad? [*She goes to desk and begins to type languidly, keeping her ears and eyes open.*]

PANTALOON. [*Continuing crossly.*] I've had about enough of your fooling, Mr. Harlequin, just about enough. You're not fit for a responsible job. Do you suppose Pantaloon's soap would be the best on the market to-day if I'd fooled away my time when I was your age?

HARLEQUIN. No, but I guess the good old public would have wagged on all right! [*At this Columbine begins to type loud and furiously, pounding the keys with all her might.* HARLEQUIN *starts, gives her a quick glance, and changes his tone and tactics.*] I mean it wouldn't of known what it was missing. Look here, Mr. Pantaloon, I've got some great little ideas, honest I have. Just give me a chance to show you the new ad I've got in mind.

PANTALOON. [*Still grumpy.*] I don't care what you've got in your mind—that is, if you have one, which I doubt —I need to see results on paper! [*He taps the order sheets*] You don't think enough about your work, that's the trouble with you, young man——

HARLEQUIN. [*Protesting.*] Why, Mr. Pantaloon, I think about those orders a lot—all the time—

PANTALOON. [*Sarcastically.*] Yes, all the time you can spare from your dancing and your shows and fooling with Miss Columbine!

HARLEQUIN. [*Quickly.*] You leave Miss Columbine out of this—see!

[*Again Columbine intervenes by furious typing so that* PANTALOON *does not catch all* HARLEQUIN *has said.*

PANTALOON. [*To* COLUMBINE.] Miss Columbine, really, a little less noise! I can't hear myself think. [*Continuing with pompous eloquence.*] Don't interrupt me, Harlequin! As I was saying you should think of soap orders from the moment you wake in the morning till you go to sleep at night; you should dream of them——

HARLEQUIN. What you gonna do if your dreams won't behave? [*He steals a sly glance at* COLUMBINE.] Why my dreams——

PANTALOON. I always dream of soap.

HARLEQUIN. [*Again forgetting* COLUMBINE's *warning glances and poundings.*] Look here, it's all right if you want to think soap, and eat soap, and dream soap! It's your soap an' every cake means cash to you. But you can't expect me to feel same's if I heard the chink coming in every time somebody buys one! [*Again* COLUMBINE *bangs the keys in an effort to drown him out.*]

PANTALOON. [*Thundering.*] You'll drive me mad, between you! Miss Columbine, how many times must I tell you not to bang those damned keys so hard? [*She stops shooting a warning glance at* HARLEQUIN.] Things can't go on like this any longer. Remember what I told you when I gave you the job—you've got to deliver the goods—

HARLEQUIN. Well, just give me a chance, an' I'll show you——

PANTALOON. If I had a dollar for every chance I've given you, I'd be a millionaire. [*Eyeing him searchingly.*] I don't know why I should give you another after what

occurred here this morning, and if it wasn't for the bother of breaking someone else in, you wouldn't be here now.

HARLEQUIN. [*Seeing he isn't fired.*] All right, Mr. Pantaloon, I'll go get the ad copy ready.

PANTALOON. Remember this is positively your last chance, the printer's waiting for that copy, and I'll give you till noon to show me what you can do.

HARLEQUIN. It sure is going to get them this time, why the dear old public will just eat it right up! [*He goes out.* COLUMBINE *giggles at his last speech and as he passes her, she speaks to him, low.*]

COLUMBINE. [*To* HARLEQUIN.] Gee, I hope not, any public that ate his soap would feel pretty sick!

PANTALOON. [*Fuming.*] What's that you say, Miss Columbine? Don't go around muttering. I fired my last secretary because she muttered. [*He beckons to her.*] I want you to take a letter for me. [*She brings over her pad and pencil and seats herself in chair by his desk. She crosses her legs revealing as she does so a great length of silk stocking, rolled down at the knee.* MR. PANTALOON'S *eyes bulge, and he points to this, his finger trembling with disapproval.*] Miss Columbine, your legs! They're a disgrace to my office.

COLUMBINE. [*With spirit.*] Look here, Mr. Pantaloon, maybe I'm not any Ziegfeld beauty, but my legs ain't anything to be ashamed of!

PANTALOON. You needn't expose them like that.

COLUMBINE. I haven't got any reason to hide 'em!

PANTALOON. [*Pointing to her dress, and shoes.*] And what kind of a way to dress is that?

COLUMBINE. It's the way I dress, and I'm glad of it! Maybe you think I can afford to buy a different dress for the office an' every show an' dance I go to. Well, I can't

on twenty per, an' if I gotta make one do, it's goin' to be the kind I like.

PANTALOON. [*Thundering.*] Stop talking, and pull down your skirt! [COLUMBINE *does so, having said her say.* PANTALOON *glares at her, then clearing his throat he begins to dictate.*] Take this letter:—William A. Willcox, Esq., 294 Broad Boulevard, Cutterville, Idaho. Dear Sir, Yours of the first instant received and am giving same my attention—my personal attention. As we want all our customers to be satisfied that our products are the best on the market, you will readily see that should I comply with your request for a reduced quotation on our present price list, I could not continue to keep up the standard set and maintained by PANTALOON'S PUREST PINE PERFUMED SOAP for the past twenty years. New paragraph. Mr. R. M. Scapino, our special salesman, is starting for the west today. He will carry a complete line of our goods for your inspection, also can quote you prices on same. New paragraph. Believe me, dear Sir, nothing could give me greater satisfaction than the knowledge that my soap had through your co-operation become a permanent—er—er [*He struggles for a word, and* COLUMBINE *refuses to help him out.* PANTALOON, *floundering crossly.*] Oh, read that last part over again.

COLUMBINE. [*Reading mechanically.*] Nothing could give me greater satisfaction than the knowledge that my soap had through your co-operation become a permanent—

PANTALOON. Institution in your community life. Please remit money order at once. All settlements conducted on a strictly cash basis.—Very truly yours——

[*He is interrupted by the opening of the door to outer office.* SCAPINO *enters, giving* COLUMBINE *a meaning glance before he speaks to* PANTALOON. *He is dressed in the black garments and cloak of*

the villain of early pantomime. His voice is a nasal, city one, and when he speaks or looks at COLUMBINE *he is always over familiar in his manner.*

SCAPINO. [*With a hail-fellow-well-met air.*] Hello, Mr. Pantaloon, didn't expect to see me this morning, did you?

PANTALOON. Well, Scappy, it isn't often you show up the morning before you start on a trip, not when you got your money the day before. [*He laughs. Then speaks to* COLUMBINE, *motioning her to the typewriter.*] Get that off right away. [*Offering cigar.*] Have a smoke?

SCAPINO. [*Taking out his cigarette case.*] No thanks —got my own. [*He lights one.*] Thought you'd want to give my samples and lists the run over 'fore I go. They're on exhibition next door. [*He points towards the other office.*]

PANTALOON. [*Patting him on the shoulder admiringly.*] Why, Scappy, you know I always leave everything to you.

SCAPINO. Thanks, but I'd feel easier if I had your personal O. K. on the price lists. I'm never sure if that fool boy has got 'em right.

PANTALOON. Well, all right, we always got to be sure when it comes to the money. Wish Harlequin was more like you, Scappy.

SCAPINO. [*Grinning.*] Can't expect to find a chap like me on every bush, you know! [*As* PANTALOON *pauses at the door to outer office, waiting for him.*] I'll be right with you, only, say, I'd like to get Miss Columbine here to type out a little memorandum for me. How about it?

PANTALOON. Sure, seeing it's you, Scappy. After that last deal you put over you can have about anything you want round this office! [*He goes out.*]

SCAPINO. [*Seating himself familiarly on* COLUMBINE'S *desk.*] Hear what he said, Sweetie? Anything I want in this office I can have. Well, you know what I want first of all. [*He leans over and kisses her. She does not protest, but she does not return the kiss.*]

COLUMBINE. [*Drawing away.*] Look out, Scappy.

SCAPINO. Oh, come now, kid, don't act so scared. S'pose'n he was to catch us at it, he wouldn't care. I could run him easy with my hands tied, he's so crazy to have me put his old soap over. [*Bending over her.*] An' after today he won't be tellin' you what to do—how about it?

COLUMBINE. [*Evasively.*] I don't know what you're talkin' about.

SCAPINO. Say, don't you try to put any of that kind of talk over on me! It don't go—you know darned well, why I phoned this morning, an' why I blew in here half an hour before my train goes.

COLUMBINE. Well, why shouldn't you come in here? It's got nothin' to do with me!

SCAPINO. Oh, hasn't it, little Miss Innocence? Maybe you wasn't wise to why I got rid of the old man just now? Couldn't guess, could you, dearie? [*He slips his arm round her*] Didn't I make things pretty plain last night, Honey?

COLUMBINE. [*Hesitating a little.*] Oh, you made 'em plain all right, only I told you then it didn't go with me.

SCAPINO. [*Persistently.*] I don't pay no 'tention to what they say! And a little girl like you can change her mind mighty quick round train time. Say, Honey, I was tryin' to tell you somethin' when I called up just now and you cut me off so short—look—— [*He takes two long green railroad tickets from his pocket, and waves them before her eyes.*] Two on the twentieth century, leaving at twelve.

COLUMBINE. [*Slowly.*] Then you—you did mean what you said last night?

SCAPINO. Mean it? My Gawd, kid, don't you know when a chap's gone crazy over you?

COLUMBINE. Well, I thought maybe it was just the music an' lights an' dancin' an' I just happened to be the girl.

SCAPINO. You just happen to be the girl—there, you've said it, kid! An' I'm like the little ole ad—"I want what I want when I want it"—an' you're it!

COLUMBINE. Say, it's fierce when you go on like that, Scappy! [*She laughs a little nervously.*] You act like a regular caveman!

SCAPINO. [*Pleased.*] That's me, Sweetheart, an' I'm gonna carry you away—sling you right over my shoulder like they do in the movies. [*He makes a move to catch her in his arms, but she evades him lightly.*]

COLUMBINE. [*Quickly.*] Cut it out, Scappy!

SCAPINO. Can't help it, Dearie, you make me lose my head. [*Sobering.*] Listen now, no joke, that ticket's yours. [*He puts it in her hand, and she fingers it slowly.*] It's to the coast—see—it's a six months' trip this time, and Pantaloon's raised my pay—D'you get me?

COLUMBINE. Sure.

SCAPINO. An', believe me, I'm no tight wad.

COLUMBINE. I'll say you're some spender, Scappy.

SCAPINO. [*Now fully launched on his plan.*] You know me and you know the kind of time I'll give you. All the clothes you want—just go in a store and pick dresses like they was daisies—plenty of jazz, and all the shows you want to see. Nothin' to do all day—no typewriter to bang—how'll that seem?

COLUMBINE. [*Touching it.*] Gee, that would seem like heaven.

SCAPINO. That's what it would be like—heaven—an' you and me playin' round in it together, but no saints t' interfere. Well, Kid, what d'you say?

COLUMBINE. Oh I—I want to, but there's somethin' inside me that kind of doesn't want me to——

SCAPINO. Don't bother about your insides, Honey, I never do—less I got a pain or somethin'. [*Searchingly.*] Remember now this kind of chance don't come every day. I've put things up to you straight. It ain't as if you went round with your eyes shut like a week-old kitten. You know what I can do for a girl like you, an' I never bluffed you with that wedding ring stuff.

COLUMBINE. Sure, I know.

SCAPINO. You're no fool—once I thought maybe you were sweet on that moony Harlequin chap. You kinda looked at him that way, but take it from me, Kid, he'll never get on—he's not the hustlin' kind.

COLUMBINE. [*Quickly.*] Well, who says he is?

SCAPINO. Why, there's hundreds just like him every place, an' girls that are fools enough to marry 'em, and go on all their lives workin' an' wearin' last year's clothes an' never havin' more'n a nickel left over from their week's pay, but you wouldn't be fool enough to fall for anything like that!

COLUMBINE. [*Thoughtfully.*] But you might love a person, Scappy.

SCAPINO. [*Scornfully.*] Love—huh—Yeh, I've seen it on thirty a week! It don't last long, you bet! [*Getting up.*] Well, is it O. K.?

COLUMBINE. [*Slowly.*] Why, yes, I—I guess so, Scappy.

SCAPINO. Good, I knew you'd come round at the last minute! I gotta get my things checked now. 'Spose it wouldn't do if you was to go out when I do anyhow. Might

make 'em suspect. You hang on to the ticket an' go out same's if you was just going out to your lunch early, then you beat it for the station. It'll only take you five minutes in a taxi, an' I'll be waiting at the gate—— [*Taking out his watch.*] Eleven thoity, we've only got half an hour to make it. Never mind about takin' anything, you can stop off in Chicago an' pick up some glad rags, an' drop Pantaloon a line to say your Great Aunt Sarah sent for you to come and visit her. Now didn't I fix it up all nice an' pleasant for my Sweetie?

COLUMBINE. [*With an effort at gaiety.*] You sure are some fast worker. [*More slowly.*] I'll be there at twelve.

SCAPINO. You'd better be. Train goes on the dot—old engine don't wait a minute, an' neither does Scappy. An' I don't give folks second chances once they pass me up. [*There is a sound outside.*]

COLUMBINE. Look out, Mr. Pantaloon's coming.

SCAPINO. Well, what of it? You won't have to worry about him much longer. Give me another kiss on account, Honey. [*She does so. A second later the door opens admitting* PANTALOON.]

PANTALOON. [*To* SCAPINO.] Thought you were coming out.

SCAPINO. Well, I found a good deal to dictate to Miss Columbine. [*He winks at her.*]

PANTALOON. Dictate—hum—I hope she took it better from you than she does from me.

SCAPINO. You don't know how to handle her right, that's all. Find everything O. K.?

PANTALOON. Everything O. K. Remember now, Scappy, I'm counting on you to put things over big.

SCAPINO. Leave it to me, and you'll be building an addition to the soap factory by next month! [*They shake hands.*] Well, so long. Goodbye, Miss Columbine. [*Mak-*

ing her an elaborate bow. PANTALOON *accompanies him to the door opening on the outer office.*]

PANTALOON. [*Speaking from door to* HARLEQUIN.] HARLEQUIN, I'll take a look at the new ad copy now. [*He goes out again for a minute.*]

[COLUMBINE *takes out the ticket, turning it over and over in her hand. At a sound from next door she puts it back in desk, resuming her typing.* PANTALOON *enters, followed by a protesting* HARLEQUIN.

HARLEQUIN. [*Pointing to sheets* PANTALOON *holds.*] Say, listen, Mr. Pantaloon, you took the wrong ones. That isn't the soap copy.

PANTALOON. [*Eyeing him suspiciously.*] You were working on it weren't you?

HARLEQUIN. Well, you see, I got a kind of idea for a song, an' I thought I'd just get it on paper 'fore I started on the ad——

PANTALOON. A song? I don't pay you to write songs, I pay you to write ads!

HARLEQUIN. Sure, I know, but I thought this would kind of warm me up to fix you a regular whiz-bang.

PANTALOON. [*Crossly.*] I don't know what you mean by that, and I don't want to, but I'll take a look at this.

HARLEQUIN. [*Unable to suppress a natural pride.*] Well, 'course, that's only the chorus, you know. [*Eagerly.*] Maybe if I was to read it to you——

PANTALOON. [*Testily waving him aside.*] No, no, it's never safe. People who write things always make them sound better'n they really are. [*He puts on his glasses, frowns over the writing, and reads slowly and without much expression.*]

The country girl with cheeks of brown
Has nothing on my girl in town,

Who never fails to dust her nose,
And make her cheeks out-rose the rose;
Her lips, O Boy, I wouldn't miss
A chance to give those lips a kiss!
And as for hair, your country girls
Would sell their farms to have her curls,
Her hands, with little shiny nails,
Were never made for milking pails,
But when you see them hit the keys—
You feel like falling on your knees!

[PANTALOON *stops short.* HARLEQUIN *has fidgeted during this recital, stealing an occasional glance at* COLUMBINE, *who has avoided meeting his eyes.*

HARLEQUIN. [*Bends over her desk.*] Like it?

PANTALOON. [*Cutting this short.*] Well, it might be worse, young man, it might be worse.

HARLEQUIN. [*Eagerly.*] I know a fellow I could get to write me some music for it, if we had the cash—a real peppy little tune, you know. [*He starts to hum a lively one, but* PANTALOON *stops him.*]

PANTALOON. [*Turning on him sharply.*] Music! Good Heavens, it doesn't need any music, what it needs is a couple of lines to advertise my soap!

HARLEQUIN. [*Aghast.*] Soap?

COLUMBINE. But it ain't an ad, Mr. Pantaloon, it's a song.

PANTALOON. It's going to be an ad when I get through with it—the only decent one he ever wrote. [*Thinking.*] Ho—hum—how about ending it like this—— [*He reads the verse over, and adds:*]

And every day she bathes, we hope,
In Pantaloon's Pine Perfumed Soap.

There, that'll fix it! [*He takes pencil and is about to write this in, when* HARLEQUIN *stops him.*]

HARLEQUIN. No, you don't, not on your sweet life! I didn't write that to advertise your old soap and I won't have you queer it!

[COLUMBINE *gets up at this, and takes a step towards* HARLEQUIN, *as if to stop him. A clock strikes the quarter outside, and she looks down at her watch nervously, then towards the door. It is plain she is struggling between going to keep her appointment with* SCAPINO *and her desire to help* HARLEQUIN *out of a tight place. She decides on the latter course, and returns to the desk where she sets about typing as loudly as she can. But* HARLEQUIN *and* PANTALOON *pay no heed to her efforts this time.*

PANTALOON. [*Loudly.*] Of course I'll change it! Everything you write in this place belongs to the company anyway. You've been paid for doing nothing long enough.

HARLEQUIN. If you think you own my mind an' all that's in it, you've got another guess coming! [COLUMBINE *types furiously but with no result.*]

PANTALOON. [*Paying no attention to* HARLEQUIN, *repeating last lines to himself.*]

And every day she bathes, we hope,
In Pantaloon's Fine Perfumed Soap!

There! That gets the full name in. Always do that—nothing genuine without it. Of course that part's mine, but the rest shows improvement. Sure to make them buy.

HARLEQUIN. [*Now roused.*] But I tell you I didn't write it to make them buy your soap! I wrote it about Miss Columbine, an' I won't have her turned into any old ad!

COLUMBINE. [*Unable to keep still any longer, giving another desperate glance at her watch.*] Oh, Quin, let him

do what he wants with it! I don't care a hang if I am a soap ad, you'n me 'll know you wrote it different!

HARLEQUIN. You leave it to me, Honey.

PANTALOON. [*Angrily.*] One moment, young man, I've had about enough of this—either I change this the way I want to, or you're fired. You can take your choice.

HARLEQUIN. [*With dignity.*] All right, seein' you know such a lot about ads, you can go ahead and write your own. I'm through! [*He picks up the paper from* PANTALOON'S *desk.*]

PANTALOON. [*Fuming.*] Just like you, you crazy young fool, and good riddance, too! Get your pay and clear out! Clear out, I said, and stay out, don't come whining round here for me to take you back!

COLUMBINE. [*Persuasively.*] Look here, Mr. Pantaloon——

PANTALOON. [*Irately.*] Don't interrupt me, Miss Columbine, I'm well rid of a lazy, good for nothing clerk, and I forbid you to have him hanging round this office in the future—— [*He moves towards door to other office, stopping by it, and addressing Columbine again.*] And be ready to take some more dictation when I come back. [*He goes out.*]

HARLEQUIN. [*Crossing quickly to* COLUMBINE, *and shrugging shoulders lightly.*] Well, that's that!

COLUMBINE. [*Distressed.*] Oh, Quin, you're fired! I banged and banged an' you wouldn't listen!

HARLEQUIN. I was too darned mad to hear you. The nerve of him, sticking his old Pine Perfumed Soap on you! [*He holds out the paper, laying it on her desk.*]

COLUMBINE. But, Quin, I wish't you hadn't gone an' got yourself fired.

HARLEQUIN. [*Easily.*] Well, I've been fired 'fore this,

and, say, you know darned well you're glad I didn't let him put anything like that over on me.

COLUMBINE. [*Admiringly.*] You'd ought to of kept your job, Quin, but I sure was proud the way you stood up to him.

HARLEQUIN. [*Gayly, tapping his chest.*] I tell you this dog's got some life in it, yet!

COLUMBINE. [*Guiltily.*] Still, if it hadn't of been for me, you'd be holding down your job.

HARLEQUIN. [*Putting his arms about her.*] If it hadn't of been for you, Honey, I don't know where I'd be! Listen now, I'll go get my pay an' we'll go to a show tonight—any one you say. [*He goes out to the other office.*]

[*Left alone,* COLUMBINE *takes another hasty look at her watch, runs over to the rack, puts her cloak on quickly, takes vanity box and ticket from her desk. She is just turning away quickly towards door back, when her eye falls on the paper with the verses that* HARLEQUIN *left on her desk. She picks it up, reading it through, her lips spelling out the words under her breath.*

COLUMBINE. [*Softly reading the last lines.*]

And when you see her hit the keys——
You feel like falling on your knees!

[*Suddenly she lifts the paper to her lips, and her voice has a little break in it, as she whispers to herself.*] I'll bang 'em the rest of my life, Quin, if it makes you feel like that. [*She stuffs it quickly inside her dress, then taking out the ticket from her vanity case, deliberately tears it into bits. The last one falls to the floor as the door opens and* HARLEQUIN *enters waving some bills.*]

HARLEQUIN. [*Gaily.*] Got it, an' you bet it'll seem good to have a whole week with nothin' to do in it!

COLUMBINE. [*With a little sigh.*] Maybe it'll be more'n a week, Quin, jobs ain't so easy to find these days.

HARLEQUIN. Well, I've had three this year an' four last, so I guess I will again.

COLUMBINE. [*Softly.*] Did you mean all the things you wrote, Quin, I mean in the poem?

HARLEQUIN. Did I mean it? Didn't it sound that way, Honey? [*Seeing her cloak.*] What's the idea goin' out so early?

COLUMBINE. [*Looking up at him earnestly.*] Listen, Quin, does it cost a whole lot to get married? Right off, I mean, license an' ring an' everythin' reg'lar?

HARLEQUIN. [*Dazed.*] You mean—*us?*

COLUMBINE. Sure, I do! Think I'd bother about anybody else?

HARLEQUIN. [*Hugging her rapturously.*] Say, wake me up if I'm dreaming! Could we get married right off? Why this very minute wouldn't be too soon to suit yours truly!

COLUMBINE. How much would it cost?

HARLEQUIN. Coupl'a dollars, I guess, anyway I know a chap that works down to City Hall could put it through for us quick. The ring's up to you. I got my thoity an six over from last week, an' there's my ukulele an' cigarette case I could hock—that ought to see us through.

COLUMBINE. [*Softly.*] A girl I know's got a real cute little flat up town—two rooms an' bath an' kitchenette. She's goin' 'cause it's too far out, but I guess we could manage, an' she'd let us have it cheap for the summer—'cause it's five flights up an' only got gas——

HARLEQUIN. Sounds good to me, Dearie, but any place would that had you in it. Come along out now, an' we'll go right to it.

COLUMBINE. I gotta tell Mr. Pantaloon. My, but he'll

be hoppin' mad. [*She sticks paper in typewriter, clicks off a line or two,* HARLEQUIN *bending over and reading what she writes smilingly. She takes out sheet and puts it on* PANTALOON*'s desk.*]

HARLEQUIN. [*Noticing torn ticket on floor and picking up a bit.*] What's this? Looks like a ticket to somewheres.

COLUMBINE. [*Hastily and with a little shiver.*] Maybe it was one once. [*Going to him.*] Hang on to me tight, Quin, 'cause I might change my mind.

HARLEQUIN. [*Laughing and squeezing her arm.*] No, you don't, not this time. [*Looking down at her in a puzzled way.*] Say, you're a funny kid, Columbine, when I got a job I can't get you to think about gettin' married, but soon's I get fired you can't wait. It's beyond me!

COLUMBINE. It's beyond me, too, Quin, but that's how 'tis! Are you glad?

HARLEQUIN. [*Kissing her, as they move towards door back.*] Well, I'll say I am! [*They go out. In a moment* PANTALOON *enters door left.*]

PANTALOON. [*Crossly.*] Miss Columbine, Miss Columbine, that girl's never round when I want her! [*Going to his desk and seeing note she left, picking it up and reading it over slowly.*] "Harlequin and I have gone to get married, so somebody else can bang your keys." [*He crumples the note and flings it angrily in the waste basket.*] Damn! Didn't even stop for her pay, well, she'll be back for it soon enough! [*Hand organ starts in street, sounding faintly through closed window.*] Damn that hurdy gurdy! Damn those crazy young fools, they've upset my whole day!

CURTAIN

THE PATCHWORK QUILT

CHARACTERS

OLD MRS. WILLIS
ANNE WENDALL, *her daughter*
JOE WENDALL, *Anne's husband*
BETTY, *their daughter*

In the Fantasy *

MOLLY
WILLIAM
EMILY

* Here the character of Emily may be doubled with Betty, the same child playing both parts if necessary. Two different actresses may play Molly at twenty and at twenty-seven, but they should look alike and it is better to have one person play both parts, even though a quick change is required.

All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union, by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. Moving Picture rights reserved.

Attention is called to the penalties provided by law for any infringements of the dramatist's rights, as follows:

"Sec. 4966:—Any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition for which copyright has been obtained, without the consent of the proprietor of said dramatic or musical composition, or his heirs and assigns, shall be liable for damages therefor, such damages in all cases to be assessed at such sum, not less than one hundred dollars for the first and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance, as to the court shall appear to be just. If the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, such person or persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year."—U. S. Revised Statutes, Title 60, Chap. 3.

THE PATCHWORK QUILT

A Fantasy in One Act

SCENE: *An upstairs bedroom and sitting room combined, of a modern city house, which has been "done over" recently. The mahogany furniture somehow fails to give the impression of antiquity that the decorator probably intended. We know at a glance that none of it has been much lived upon, and the conventional angles at which the chairs are arranged accentuate this feeling of newness. Several good prints, in subdued tones, hang on the walls, but the only picture which seems to be a personal belonging is a portrait in an oval gold frame over the fireplace. This is the likeness, in old fashioned pastel, of a little girl of six, round-eyed and serious, with the smooth ringlets and low necked dress of forty years ago. A coal fire burns in the grate. It is late afternoon.*

When the curtain rises old Mrs. Willis *is wandering aimlessly about the room. She goes from one article of furniture to another, fingering each carefully and then moving on to another as if she were searching for something that should feel familiar to her fingers. She is a frail old lady in obviously new, and handsome black clothes, in which she seems tiny and out of place. Over her face there is a film of daze and bewilderment.*

She has reached the bed and is fingering a gray silk puff lying there, turning it over and over with obvious dis-

appointment, when JOE WENDELL *and his wife,* ANNE, *enter. The former is in the forties, well dressed, with a stubborn chin and the keen, practical face of a business man. The woman is rather pretty in a nervous, twentieth-century sort of way. She wears a smart afternoon dress, and is removing her hat and gloves as she enters.*

ANNE. [*To her husband, indicating* MRS. WILLIS.] There, Joe, you can see for yourself the state she's in! [*Going to the old lady.*] Oh, mother, *do* sit down, and don't keep fidgeting so! [*Old* MRS. WILLIS *looks at her in bewilderment. She makes no answer, and her daughter speaks again, more loudly this time, though with an effort at kindness.*] What are you looking for?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Turning from one to the other blankly.*] I'm very sorry to disturb you, but I'm looking for my room. I seem to have lost the way.

ANNE. [*To* JOE.] Just as I told you, this is one of her bad days! [*Speaking in loud simple tones as if to a child.*] Why, this is your room, mother, you've just forgotten again——

MRS. WILLIS. [*Polite but firm.*] Oh, no, I wouldn't have forgotten my own room, not after so many years,—such a pretty one, too, with a table and six carved chairs. [*Proudly.*] They came from Boston—and a beautiful patchwork quilt.

JOE. [*With irritation.*] Can't you stop her, Anne, it's hopeless once she gets started on that old quilt?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Nodding to herself.*] There's not another one like it anywhere's round. I always said the rainbow itself wasn't a mite prettier'n my patchwork quilt!

ANNE. Oh, mother, you're all mixed up again—you're in your room at my house—[*Leading her over to a chair.*]

Now you sit down here by the fire, and try very hard to listen to what Joe and I ask you.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Feeling of the chair.*] This chair isn't mine! It's got plain legs—mine had carved ones——

JOE. [*Helping* ANNE *out.*] What's the matter with these chairs? I think Anne's fixed you up a real pretty room.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Blankly.*] Anne—Anne isn't here any more. [*She looks plaintively from one to the other.*] I can't just remember what happened, but she isn't here any more. Emily's all I've got now.

ANNE. [*To* JOE.] You see, she doesn't even know me!

JOE. [*Shortly.*] Must be a real cheerful feeling!

ANNE. Don't, Joe, I'm worried enough with this business about the farm.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Repeating wistfully.*] Yes, Emily's all I've got now—— [*She points to the picture over the mantle.*]

ANNE. [*Turning again to her, and speaking wearily.*] Why, mother, don't you remember that Emily's dead? [*Leaning over her and speaking distinctly.*] She's been dead for over forty years.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Trembling a little.*] Emily—dead? Why she couldn't be. She comes to see me real often—she's the only one of my children that does now——

ANNE. [*To* JOE.] You can see how she's failed the last month, Joe.

JOE. Yes, don't see how we'll get anything out of her in time.

ANNE. [*To* JOE.] Just leave her to herself for a few minutes, it may bring her round. [*They move away from the old lady who sits in her chair by the fire, staring straight before her, and occasionally feeling the chair legs*

hopefully, to sink back again disappointed at their plain surfaces.]

JOE. [*Turning to* ANNE *with an air of finality.*] Look here, Anne, are you sure that deed isn't with her things somewhere?

ANNE. [*Impatiently.*] Of course it isn't, Joe, you know I went through everything when we had the room done over.

JOE. Still, I always said you made a mistake clearing out all her junk wholesale like that. We might——

ANNE. [*Interrupting.*] You know I couldn't have stood those old moth-eaten things another day! It wasn't as if the furniture had been really good either—that ghastly walnut and horsehair and a patchwork quilt with all the colors of the rainbow swearing at each other! [*On the defensive.*] And I didn't send everything away—there's Emily's picture—the decorator said it had nice coloring.

JOE. [*Worried.*] Well, I don't give a darn what the fool decorator said, it's that deed I'm after, and we've got to find out where she keeps it.

ANNE. But, Joe, they must have a record at Green River.

JOE. [*Pulling out an envelope.*] Heard this morning —seem's things got all mixed up there after the town hall burned down. A lot of the old books and records were lost, and it's going to take months to straighten out all the boundaries and claims. It may not even have been registered. They thought, of course, that we had the deed to mother's place. In that case it would be easy enough.

ANNE. Well, but didn't you explain it to Mr. Jenkins?

JOE. Of course I did! But you know what he is—says he'll take mother's place at our price, house, woodland and all if the title's clear and the sale can go right through.

ANNE. But he'll give us a few days more surely?

JOE. Not Jenkins. He's made up his mind to start right in on the hotel plans—unless the ground's broken before frost sets in, all the building will have to wait till next year, and he says that rather than do that he'll take the Thompson place five miles north, though the view doesn't compare with ours.

ANNE. [*Eagerly.*] We could let him start in work right away and get the deed later.

JOE. [*Flinging out his hands with an irritated gesture.*] But can't you see, Anne, legally we don't own that place! Of course everybody knows the farm belongs to your mother, but we can't prove it without that blamed piece of paper!

ANNE. [*Earnestly.*] Oh Joe, we've got to put that sale through somehow! Why, think what it would mean to us——

JOE. [*Gloomily.*] Do you suppose I've been thinking of anything else all week? If he takes the Thompson place everybody'll buy at that end of the town and our land will go way down in value.

ANNE. We must find that deed! Think of all we could do with the money the place would bring. We could buy that stucco house in Wildwood Park that you said we couldn't afford, and go abroad for next summer and get a Cadillac instead of the Ford coupe.

JOE. Say, Anne, if you'd get her talking instead of spending money maybe we won't ever get hold of——

ANNE. All right, I'll try again—[*With a little sigh*] and we could have a French governess for Betty just like the Lawrences' or maybe that new boarding school would be better——

JOE. Oh, Betty's all right. Funny, the way she and your mother seem to hit it off.

ANNE. But, Joe, I don't think it's good for her to see

anyone whose mind wanders so. [*Going towards* MRS. WILLIS, *who is sitting just where they left her, staring before her in a subdued unhappy way.*] Now, Mother, we want you to try and remember about the farm.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Rousing for the first time at the last word.*] The farm—yes—you have to climb the hill to get there, right on top it is. There's lilacs by the door and you can look out over four counties from the front porch.

JOE. [*Encouraged.*] There, she does remember. [*To* MRS. WILLIS.] Now about the deed, you must have had one. You know, a paper that says the farm belongs to you.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Reminiscently.*] White laylocks, they are——

ANNE. [*Urging.*] The deed, mother, try to remember where it is?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Her face wrinkling with the effort to remember.*] I don't know—everything's got all tangled up in my head, like a ball o' yarn——

JOE. [*Speaking slowly and distinctly.*] Listen to me, mother—a little piece of paper with a red seal—that's what we want. And it says that the farm and woodland belong to you—you must have put it somewhere?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Now hopelessly bewildered.*] Maybe if Emily would come she'd tell you what you want to know—but you said she's—she's—— [*Her voice trails away plaintively.*]

ANNE. [*Trying to draw her out.*] You told me once that father gave it to you on your wedding day—don't you remember?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Feeling of the chair, and rising to go to the table.*] I want my carved chairs, and my table with the scratches on it. [*Smiling to herself at some remembrance of her own.*] Anne, she always would smuggle her kitten in to meals with her—that's how the scratches come

to be there. I like to sit and feel them when I'm all alone.

ANNE. [*Turning to* JOE.] It's no use when she gets all worked up like this.

MRS. WILLIS. [*By the bed, her voice rising in agitation.*] It isn't here—someone's taken my quilt!

JOE. [*To* ANNE.] Good Lord, she's started on that again! Well, I guess it isn't much use, and I've got to let Jenkins know by to-night.

ANNE. She may quiet down if we leave her here awhile. Sometimes she acts quite like herself.

JOE. [*With a shrug.*] All right, I'll take another look through those papers we kept from her desk—might give me a clue.

ANNE. [*To* MRS. WILLIS.] Sit down again, mother. [*Helping her to the chair again.*] That's better, now you'll try and remember about the paper—folded up small with sealing wax on it. Joe and I'll come back soon.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Wearily.*] I'll try—but if I could have my chairs and my quilt——

ANNE. [*To* JOE *at the door.*] You fixed it all up with the lawyer so her signature won't be necessary?

JOE. Yes, she's not really responsible any more, and it's lucky in this case, for she'd never let the old place go, not the way she hangs on to things.

ANNE. That sale simply must go through, Joe.

[*They go out, and* MRS. WILLIS *stares after them wonderingly.*

MRS. WILLIS. [*Shaking her head.*] Those people wanted something—something they thought I had. [*Wistfully.*] I don't know what it's all about. [*She begins to whimper a little brokenly to herself.*] They're all gone, and I've looked everywhere for 'em—my carved chairs, and my patchwork quilt, and Emily's gone, too——

[*She cries softly in the slowly darkening room. Twilight is coming and save for the firelight the room seems stiff and cheerless. Suddenly the door bursts open and a merry little girl of six or seven bounds in, her arms filled with an old patchwork quilt whose folds trail after her. She runs towards the old lady eagerly.*

BETTY. Look what I found, Grandma!

[MRS. WILLIS *turns, rising with incredulous joy at sight of the quilt.*

MRS. WILLIS. [*Trembling a little.*] Then it isn't lost —Betty, you've brought Grandma's patchwork quilt back to her——

BETTY. But it was on Katy, the cook's bed.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Gathering the quilt in her arms, pressing its familiar folds close.*] My patchwork quilt—mine —mine——

BETTY. It's got so many colors in it, not just one like the kind mother buys, [*Fingering it with interest*] and it's pretty.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Softly.*] It's beautiful.

BETTY. [*Wonderingly.*] You're crying on it.

MRS. WILLIS. [*In soft sure tones, the dazed look beginning to slip from her face.*] It's all coming back to me now.

BETTY. [*Curiously.*] What's coming back, Grandma? [*Bending over the quilt.*] I don't see anything.

[MRS. WILLIS *moves to the chair by the fire, sinking into it contentedly and spreading the gay maze of color over her knees. The firelight falls warmly on the little squares, as she fingers them with the eager greeting reserved only for old friends.*

MRS. WILLIS. There's that blue piece that came from

mother's old winter cashmere—she always got it out come the first of November and wore it till March excepting her best black on Sundays and her second best for afternoons.

BETTY. [*Bending over to see.*] Which one, Grandma?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Finding another.*] And this is from my first party dress.

BETTY. [*In surprise.*] Why, Grandma, did you go to parties, real ones?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Nodding.*] Never missed one—— A green silk this dress was, with a black sash and white tatting collar. William always liked me in green——

BETTY. Who was William?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Tenderly.*] William was your Grandfather. [*Suddenly she goes on speaking with a kind of slow revelation.*] Why every one of them is bringing me back something—a day, or the folks I knew and have been wanting—— [*Lifting up her head triumphantly.*] Things are getting just as clear, nothing's mixed up any more now I've got back my quilt!

BETTY. [*Who has been examining it.*] Here's a pretty square with pink flowers on it!

MRS. WILLIS. [*Pleased.*] Well, I declare, if I hadn't clean forgotten that—'twas a bit of ribbon great aunt Dolly brought me clear from Paris.

BETTY. I've got a hat that came from Paris—it tickles my ears.

MRS. WILLIS. I had a time piecin' that square to fit, but the ribbon's hardly frayed a mite.

BETTY. And here's a little yellow one—what was that, Grandma?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Touching it fondly.*] That was a piece from Emily's best dress.

BETTY. [*Surprised.*] Aunt Emily in the picture up there? [*Pointing to it.*]

MRS. WILLIS. Yes, she had it on in that picture only it didn't show as much as she hoped it would. [*Reminiscently.*] William bought that dress for her in Portland the day she was six—'twas all handmade and very dear. I scolded him for paying so much, but he could never do enough for Emily.

BETTY. [*Studying the picture.*] And did Aunt Emily like it?

MRS. WILLIS. She couldn't wait every afternoon till I'd get through my work, so I could dress her in it and curl her hair. Then she'd sit down in her little chair side of me while I did my sewing. [*Thoughtfully.*] Making this very quilt I was then. [*After a moment's pause she goes on as if she were seeing it all over again.*] Sometimes I'd baste on a square and let her sew it. She thought she was a real grown up lady then and she was just as proud—

BETTY. [*Eagerly.*] Oh, I want to see the ones Aunt Emily sewed—which ones, Grandma?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Thoughtfully.*] Let me see—about half way through I was, and her stitches were pretty big and crooked, but I never did have the heart to rip them out.

BETTY. [*Excitedly.*] There! all round that big white piece in the middle—look they're just as wobbly, like mountains and valleys in my geography.

MRS. WILLIS. [*With a little gasp.*] The white square in the middle, yes—— [*Rubbing her forehead thoughtfully.*] There was something about it. It meant more than the others, that's why I let Emily sew it—— [*Her voice trails off softly.*] Something about the white piece that made me happy.

[*She sits smoothing the white square, when a voice*

outside calls "Betty, Betty." The child rises and starts towards door.

BETTY. I've got to go to supper now, Grandma, but I'll come back when you've remembered all about the white one——

MRS. WILLIS. [*Repeating softly.*] The white one——

[*She bends over and kisses it as if it were alive. Suddenly from the dimness of the room a figure appears. As the firelight falls on it we see it is a lovely young girl, wearing a heavy white satin dress in the style of fifty years ago. Her face is flower-like, just what old* MRS. WILLIS' *might have been at twenty. Over her hair is a draping of old lace. At sight of her* MRS. WILLIS *leans forward in her chair, speaking with soft wonder.*

MRS. WILLIS. My wedding dress—and why, why I couldn't have looked as pretty as all that!

[*The girl looks about her, then beckons eagerly to someone behind her, speaking in happy, excited tones:*

GIRL. It's all right, William, there's no one here.

[*Another figure steps out of the shadows, a straight boyish one this time, clad in the tight grey trousers, and neat black braid-trimmed coat of the period. His eyes are luminous with suppressed emotions, and his face pale. In his hands he carries a bouquet of white lilacs tied with a long shimmering ribbon. At sight of him old* MRS. WILLIS *gives a little cry, and holds out her arms to him, but neither he nor the girl is aware of her presence, being completely absorbed in each other.*

WILLIAM. [*Eagerly.*] Molly, I thought they'd never let me see you——

MOLLY. I know—sister said she never saw a bridegroom behave the way you do but I don't care, there never was one like you anyway, and I wanted to see you, too, before—— [*Catching at his sleeve.*] I've been worrying so, thinking about all the things that might happen—how you *might* forget the flowers, or the ring *might* fall out of your pocket and you not know till the minister asked for it—and how could we ever be married then?

WILLIAM. [*Touching his pocket.*] It's all safe, and I didn't forget the flowers—— [*He holds out the lilacs, and she takes them with a little cry—burying her face in them.*]

MOLLY. Oh, William, I knew you'd remember about the lilacs—mother thought you'd bring lilies of the valley, but I knew better—— And these came from the old Todd place I know, because they're sweeter and whiter than any others. [*Shyly.*] Or maybe I just think so because it was up there that we—that you said——

WILLIAM. [*Bending over her.*] What I'm saying now and every minute of the day—that I love you—I love you, Molly. [*There is a pause for a moment as she slips into his arms, then he goes on softly.*] I was up before light this morning, I couldn't sleep for knowing what day it was, so I went up the hill to the old Todd place to pick these before they opened too far. The bush was full of them all nodding away in the wind, and when I came up close a thrush flew right up out of it and began to sing, just as if it knew——

MOLLY. [*Softly.*] About us? I wouldn't wonder . . . that old lilac bush must have heard you last fall when you asked me. [*Touching the flowers fondly.*] Maybe these very flowers were listening—maybe they hoped they'd come to our wedding!

WILLIAM. [*A little awkwardly.*] You look sort of like

them today, Molly—I—I'm glad they let me see you first, before the others. You didn't mind?

MOLLY. I wanted you to, [*Smoothing her dress.*] and I'm glad you think it's pretty—wasn't it good of Aunt Dolly to give it to me? It isn't every bride has a satin that can stand alone!

WILLIAM. [*Smiling at her.*] But I don't want it to stand alone—I want you to be in it!

MOLLY. [*Listening.*] There goes the knocker! Oh, William, they're beginning to come!

WILLIAM. [*Earnestly.*] Molly, maybe you thought it was queer I didn't give you a ring to wear before now——

MOLLY. [*Simply.*] I didn't need to have a ring to know you loved me.

WILLIAM. But I've brought you something, Molly, you can't wear it, but I wanted you to have it before we're married, something you're to keep for always.

[*He fumbles in his pocket and draws out a thin, folded paper with a seal.*

MOLLY. [*Excitedly.*] Oh, William, what is it? It's too dark in here to read—what does it say?

WILLIAM. It says that the old Todd place is going to have a new owner—it's going to be yours from now on.

MOLLY. Mine—mine—oh, William! [*She buries her head against his coat and he pats her hair tenderly, lifting up her face gently.*]

WILLIAM. There, I've gone and mussed your hair, and your sister'll scold me for I promised her not to touch you.

MOLLY. [*Smiling up at him radiantly.*] Is it really mine—for always?

WILLIAM. For always.

[*At this old* MRS. WILLIS *cannot contain herself any longer, and she leans forward in her chair, speaking to him earnestly.*

Mrs. Willis. And I've never let anyone else have it, William, I've always tried—— [*But neither of them hears the old lady.*]

[*Molly takes the paper and kisses it, then she tucks it into the satin bodice of her dress, hiding it safely away out of sight.*

Molly. [*Turning with a smile to* William.] There, I can wear it, William! All the time the minister is marrying us I'll feel it lying there, and it'll be just as if I were wearing the house and the lilac bushes and the view of the four counties—only no one will know except you and me!

William. We'll know, dear.

Molly. And I think I shall always keep it wrapped up in my wedding satin even when I'm too old to wear it any more.

William. [*Listening.*] I can hear them talking down stairs. It must be nearly time——

Molly. [*Suddenly clinging to him.*] Oh, William, hold me close, never mind if you do rumple me—I'm afraid.

William. Afraid, why, dear?

Molly. I don't know, I just am—sometimes—you know—it's all the things that may be going to happen to us and our house——

William. [*Gently correcting her.*] *Your* house, dear.

Molly. But I'll be growing old, dear, sometime. I woke up in the night thinking about it and I felt cold and afraid and you weren't there to tell me everything was all right.

William. [*Comfortingly.*] I'm here now, and everything is all right—we're going to be married. Come, they're calling you.

MOLLY. [*Touching the bodice of her dress.*] It's here, William—it's all safe and warm——

[*They fade into the gloom again, leaving old* MRS. WILLIS *alone by the fire, the quilt still over her knees. She looks at the place where the two have stood with an expression of longing, and stretching out her arms, whispers.*

MRS. WILLIS. Oh, William, say it again—say everything's all right—I'm here all alone——

[*Then she bends over the quilt again fingering the square in the centre. The fire flares up a little and other figures approach her. This time it is an older Molly, a serene and beautiful young woman of twenty-seven, wearing a full dress of figured green material. Her face is more thoughtful and her hair is worn in a smooth forgotten fashion. She carries a great bag of sewing on her arm and leads along a tiny child—a little girl with round, serious eyes and smooth ringlets, exactly like the child in the portrait. Her quaint low necked dress is buttercup yellow and she wears it with childish satisfaction.*

MRS. WILLIS. [*Half rising from her chair and stretching out her arms with a low cry.*] Emily!

[*The two settle themselves near the fire. Emily on a low footstool by her mother's chair.*

MOLLY. Come dear, let's sit up close to the fire.

EMILY. Does the fire like to see me in my yellow dress?

MOLLY. [*Smiling.*] Not as much as father does.

EMILY. [*Chuckling.*] No, because the fire sticks out red tongues at me, and father doesn't—he always kisses me.

MOLLY. Then I must sew ever so many squares before he gets home so he will kiss me too!

[*She takes out some patchwork squares stitched together and begins to sew. Emily watches her intently.*

EMILY. Why are your eyes all shiny, Mother, just like before a party?

MOLLY. [*Patting the square she is at work on.*] Because I've come to the centre of my quilt—see.

EMILY. [*Touching it.*] What a funny big white square! Why isn't it pretty like the other ones?

MOLLY. I love it more than all the rest.

EMILY. I like the colored ones better, why don't you?

MOLLY. Because— [*Smiling to herself.*] it was a piece of the dress I wore when father and I were married.

EMILY. [*Eagerly.*] Was I there?

MOLLY. [*Smiling at her tenderly.*] No dear, I didn't know you then.

EMILY. [*Wonderingly.*] Didn't you? I've always known you. [*After a pause.*] I wish I had been there. What makes you put the white patch in the middle?

MOLLY. Because the patch I love best must go there and— [*Smiling mysteriously.*] there's a secret about it.

EMILY. Does father know the secret too?

MOLLY. Yes, and sometime I'll tell you—when you're grown up.

EMILY. [*Disappointed.*] But that's a long way off.

MOLLY. [*With vague dread.*] A long, long way off, dear.

EMILY. Let's call the white patch Best-of-all because it's got a secret.

MOLLY. Yes, we will, and we'll remember how precious it is—that's why no one must ever have the quilt except mother.

EMILY. What does the secret look like?

MOLLY. [*Smiling.*] You see it every day whenever

you run around the house or pick me lilacs in the spring, or look out over hills to the four counties.

EMILY. [*In surprise.*] My, not all that in such a little square? [*She bends over it curiously.*]

MOLLY. [*Happily.*] Yes, it's all there, but only father and I know——

EMILY. And me—only I can't see any house or hills or anything——

MOLLY. [*Kissing her.*] Some day you will, darling, and you'll love it just as mother does.

EMILY. I want to sew on the secret patch.

MOLLY. [*Hesitating.*] Well—perhaps—I was going to do it myself because we must be very careful—it's such a precious one.

EMILY. I'll be just as careful and take the littlest stitches.

MOLLY. [*Putting it in her hands.*] There, in and out, where I've basted it, and be sure to pull the thread tight every time so there won't be a single loose stitch. [EMILY *sets to work seriously and with a will.*]

[*As her fingers touch the satin she hears something and puts her ear close to the square to listen.*

EMILY. Why—it *crackles!* Is that what makes it so precious, mother?

MOLLY. Yes, dear.

EMILY. [*Seriously.*] Well, I think the white patch would like me to be wearing your gold thimble.

MOLLY. [*Slipping it from her finger to the child's with a smile.*] Here it is then, but be careful.

EMILY. I will—and won't father be surprised to see me sewing just like a real grown up lady?

MOLLY. I think I hear him now stamping the snow off his boots at the back door. I'll go and tell him to come in and see who's making me a call!

[EMILY *chuckles joyously at this and sews very hard, while Molly rises and slips away. Old* MRS. WILLIS *leans forward, stretching out her arms to the child appealingly. Then* EMILY, *too, slips off into the gloom. At the same moment voices sound nearby, and presently the electric lights are turned on, revealing* ANNE *and* JOE. *The sudden light dazzles old* MRS. WILLIS *and she sits still with the quilt spread all about her, a mass of jumbled color.*

ANNE. [*With an exclamation of annoyance.*] Oh, that dreadful quilt! I thought I'd seen the last of it! Where in the world was that unearthed?

[*At this moment* BETTY *enters, running past her parents, and throwing herself eagerly on her Grandmother and the quilt.*

BETTY. Oh, Grandma, I've got just five minutes before I have to go to bed, and you said you'd tell me about the white square!

MRS. WILLIS. [*Stroking it.*] It—it's very precious, and it's a secret——

ANNE. [*Intervening.*] Betty, you must go right to your room. Don't ask Grandma a single question.

BETTY. Just about the quilt, mother?

ANNE. [*Touching it.*] No, and I'm sure I don't know where you found it.

BETTY. [*Hurriedly.*] It was in Katy's room, but I want it on my bed. It's pretty and Grandma made it and there's one patch that came from Paris.

ANNE. No, dear, you must take this right back to Katy's room. You have a nice pink one for your bed.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Nervously rousing herself.*] You won't take my quilt away. I've been wanting it for a long time.

BETTY. Just let Grandma tell me about this one, mother? [*Pointing to the white patch in the middle.*]

JOE. [*Firmly.*] No, Betty, take it away now. Mother and I want to talk to Grandma.

[*Anne gathers it quickly out of old* MRS. WILLIS' *clinging fingers, piling it into the child's arms.*

MRS. WILLIS. [*Protesting weakly.*] It's my quilt, Anne, and I want it, won't you let me keep it? There isn't another one like it anywhere——

ANNE. Why, mother, I couldn't think of such a thing, not after the cook's had it on her bed, and when you've got such a pretty gray one! Here, Betty, take it to Katy and then go to bed.

[BETTY *moves towards the door reluctantly, the quilt in her arms. Old* MRS. WILLIS *rises once, trying to make a last effort to rescue the quilt, and giving a last little despairing gasp of protest. But* ANNE *leads her firmly back to the chair by the fire. Betty pauses by the door, fingering the white square. As she does so she gives a surprised start, putting her ear down close to it.*

BETTY. Why—it *crackles!*

[ANNE *waves her off, closing the door on child and quilt.* JOE *has already started on the old subject.*

JOE. Have you been trying to remember, mother, about the deed of the old place?

MRS. WILLIS. [*Plaintively.*] Every square was a piece out of the past to me, and you won't let me have it.

ANNE. Now listen to Joe, mother, it's just one little thing we want.

JOE. Try to think—the paper they gave you the day you were married.

MRS. WILLIS. [*Looks from one to the other blankly.*

The film of daze has begun to spread over her face again, and she murmurs vaguely.] The white square in the centre —I liked it the best—I don't remember why—— [*Her voice trails off incoherently.*]

[*After a moment's uncertainty the old lady rises and resumes her occupation of roaming from one piece of furniture to another, feeling the chair legs and the table top.*

ANNE. [*To* JOE.] It's absolutely no use, Joe, not when she starts on that quilt.

JOE. [*Gloomily.*] Well, I guess we'll have that old place on our hands till we're a hundred!

[*The two go out and old* MRS. WILLIS *moves patiently about from one thing to another as she did at the beginning of the play. At last she reaches the bed, where she bends down to finger the gray silk puff.*

MRS. WILLIS. [*To herself.*] It's all gray now.

[*She shakes her head a little wearily and stares straight before her.*

CURTAIN

WISDOM TEETH

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

A Comedy in One Act

CHARACTERS

Henry Wellington Hill, *a shy young man*
Miss Henrietta Wellington, *Henry's aunt*
The Girl, *who has a wisdom tooth*
The Office Attendant

First played by THE STOCKBRIDGE STOCKS at the Fifteenth Street Theatre, New York, March, 1922.

Copyright, 1922, by Rachel Lyman Field. All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union, by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. Moving Picture rights reserved.

Attention is called to the penalties provided by law for any infringements of the dramatist's rights, as follows:

"Sec. 4966:—Any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition for which copyright has been obtained, without the consent of the proprietor of said dramatic or musical composition, or his heirs and assigns, shall be liable for damages therefor, such damages in all cases to be assessed at such sum, not less than one hundred dollars for the first and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance, as to the court shall appear to be just. If the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, such person or persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year."—U. S. Revised Statutes, Title 60, Chap. 3.

WISDOM TEETH

A Comedy in One Act

SCENE: *The waiting room of a dentist's office. It is of the usual dreary variety. A table centre littered with magazines, a hatrack in one corner, sofa back centre, and chairs standing about with uncompromising regularity. There are three doors, one at right leading into outer hall, and the other two, one at back and one to the left leading to and from the chamber of horrors. When the curtain rises* Miss Henrietta Wellington *is seated centre. She is a majestic elderly lady with a great deal of spirit and determination, wearing a well tailored suit and hat, furs, bag, etc. She gives the impression of being strong minded but not masculine. Near her a young man in conventionally cut, well pressed business clothes is fidgeting. He is in the twenties, but gives the impression of being younger by reason of his shyness. He is bored and decidedly out of sorts, and looks longingly towards the door to the hall. A middle aged female attendant stands near the door leading to the inner office.*

Attendant. [*Cheerfully.*] If you'll just wait here, Miss Wellington, Dr. Smith will be ready for you in a few minutes.

Miss Wellington. I thought I had the first appointment. Don't tell me Dr. Smith has begun already on someone?

ATTENDANT. [*With unperturbed cheerfulness.*] Oh, yes, he's made several extractions this morning. [*Complacently.*] We count on one about every fifteen minutes. [*Exit Attendant.*]

HENRY. [*Visibly shying.*] My God! What a life!—A tooth every fifteen minutes—it's like people in China dying every time you breathe!

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Reprovingly.*] Henry! I do wish you wouldn't be flippant about *my* tooth! And for heaven's sake, do sit down— [*Pointing.*] there——

HENRY. In this place? Not on your life! [*He grows more restless and his aunt more irritated.*]

MISS WELLINTON. [*Sighing.*] Oh, Henry, there are times when I wish you'd been a girl, and this is one of them!

HENRY. Sorry, I can't oblige you, Aunt Henrietta. [*With a mournful look around.*] I suppose they won't let a fellow smoke in this place?

MISS WELLINGTON. Of course not—— It does seem as if you might——

HENRY. [*With bored alacrity.*] I know, but I can't—

MISS WELLINGTON. Oh, Henry, you know you promised to see me through this.

HENRY. [*Mollified.*] Well, I came, didn't I?

MISS WELLINGTON. Yes, but I have an uncomfortable feeling you'll go while I'm in there under the gas and I'll find myself minus my wisdom tooth and my nephew——

HENRY. [*With gruff affection.*] Oh, I'll stay. Didn't I say I would? But don't you ever get me here again. It's fierce, this place, like a tomb or something!

MISS WELLINGTON. Henry! As if I didn't have enough on hand. I don't see why you mind, you don't have to have one out!

HENRY. [*Gloomily.*] Might as well—at least you'll have something to show for it.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*With spirit.*] I'll have a hole and an ache and a bill to show for it! I think you might try to be pleasanter, Henry, your old aunt doesn't ask you to do much for her nowadays——

HENRY. Well, I'm sorry about your tooth, Aunt Henrietta, I told you I was—only I wish you'd get your new secretary to come instead—it's a woman's place——

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Sniffing.*] Gracious, Henry, you sound like one of those early anti-suffrage speakers—woman's place—a lot you know about it—when you won't even look at a girl. It does seem as if the least you could do to make up to me for not being a girl is to marry some nice sensible one——

HENRY. [*Writhing.*] Oh, Lord, if you're going to start on that! [*He reaches for his hat warningly.*]

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Hastily.*] Well, never mind for the present. I'm sure I wish Miss Pearson could have come with me; she's a pleasant, sensible girl, but she couldn't begin work until tomorrow—had some important matters to clear up, she said. [*A pause.*] You know, Henry, I think I'm going to like her more than any secretary I've ever had.

HENRY. [*Gloomily.*] That's what you always think *before* they begin!

MISS WELLINGTON. Henry, stop! Do try to be cheerful! It isn't your tooth, and Miss Pearson isn't going to make you any trouble——

HENRY. How do I know she won't?

MISS WELLINGTON. You're my only nephew and your mother named you for me, and the least you can do——

HENRY. [*Wearily.*] I know, but I can't do it—marry, I mean, Aunt Henrietta.

[*Here the* Attendant *appears at the door, and beckons.* Miss Wellington *rises.*

Miss Wellington. And, Henry, I'm going to try and remember just how I feel when I'm going under the gas. They say you often have such strange sensations. I'll tell you all about any I have.

Henry. [*Bored.*] Yes, I suppose so.

Miss Wellington. And dreams, people do have such weird ones sometimes, real Oriental fantasies, you know, like that Lord, what's his name, Dunsany, or am I thinking of Tagore? [*To* Attendant.] All right, I'm coming. Now Henry, don't run away while I'm gone. [*Removing her hat and coat.*]

[Henry *nods and grunts something as she goes out. A moment later the* Attendant *shows a girl in at the door from the hall. She is small and pretty, very charming and rather woe-begone. She wears a trim little tailored suit and hat. The* Attendant *has been speaking to the girl at the door and we do not hear her words till she enters the room.*

Attendant. There must have been some mistake about the time. I made your appointment for nine forty five and it's only nine thirty now.

Girl. Probably I didn't understand over the telephone. [*Resignedly.*] Well, I'll just have to wait. Oh, dear——

[*She seats herself on a chair at one side of the table.* Henry *has finally dropped into one at the opposite side, but he pays no attention to her, hardly glancing in her direction. He picks up one of the tattered magazines idly, looks at the date, yawns and puts it down again. The girl bends over her gloves, unfastening them,*

and bending her head so as not to show how near to tears she really is. She is making a valiant effort not to cry, but begins fumbling in her bag for a handkerchief. In doing this she accidentally knocks off a couple of magazines. She stoops to get them, and at the same moment HENRY *bends forward on the same errand. His head somehow meets the top of the table with a resounding whack.*

HENRY. [*Glancing up quickly, he sees the tears she is keeping back.*] Oh, I say, is there anything the matter?

GIRL. [*With the beginning of a smile.*] Just a tooth.

HENRY. [*For want of something more appropriate.*] Well, that's something.

GIRL. I suppose you've come to have one out too?—Dr. Smith only pulls.

HENRY. [*Stammering.*] Well, it isn't——

GIRL. [*With a little admiring glance.*] I know, people who are really brave always say it isn't anything. I'm not very brave I guess. [*She folds up her handkerchief with an air of determination and puts it in her bag.*]

HENRY. [*To change the subject.*] Is yours—er—very painful?

GIRL. [*Shaking her head.*] No, that's the sad part about it, it doesn't hurt a bit, but it's got to go.

HENRY. [*Sagely.*] Teeth are a fearful nuisance, aren't they? Why my Aunt Henrietta's always having trouble with hers.

GIRL. How dreadful. [*Apologetically.*] I don't usually start to cry in public. I didn't mean to this morning. I'd made up my mind to be stoical—just like a Spartan mother.

HENRY. You don't say!

GIRL. Yes, I screwed up my courage to come here and

have it out, but you see I got my courage all up and ready for nine thirty and when the nurse said nine forty-five—it just somehow went.

HENRY. [*Reassuringly.*] It won't hurt.

GIRL. That's what they all say, but I had a terrible time making myself come here.

HENRY. Couldn't you get anyone to come with you?

GIRL. [*Thoughtfully.*] I think you have to know people pretty well to ask them anything like that, don't you?

HENRY. [*Sagely.*] Yes, you have to know people pretty well, or be related to them—that's the best way to make them come.

GIRL. [*With a little smile.*] Well, you see that doesn't happen to do me any good! But then you're all alone, too, so we're in the same fix.

HENRY. [*Evasively.*] We're both here anyway——

GIRL. [*Thoughtfully.*] It does seem as if we ought to be able to help each other out.

HENRY. [*Earnestly.*] You have helped me—a lot.

GIRL. [*With a sudden inspiration.*] Why we could pretend that—that—— [*She stops a little confused.*]

HENRY. [*Delightedly.* That *we're* related?

GIRL. [*Hesitating.*] Well, anyway we can tell each other about how we feel until its time.

HENRY. [*With alacrity.*] All right, you tell me all about yourself—I mean your tooth.

GIRL. [*Politely.*] Oh, but you were here first.

HENRY. No, you go ahead—— [*Prompting her.*] It's a perfectly good tooth, but it's got to come out——

GIRL. It's a wisdom tooth.

HENRY. [*Feigning surprise.*] No—you look awfully young to have them.

GIRL. No indeed. [*Sighing.*] It was so much easier

when you were little, and your first ones got loose, wasn't it? Why, my grandmother just tied a string round the tooth and the other end to the doorknob, you know—and it didn't hurt a bit, except just a funny little cold feeling——

HENRY. [*Eagerly.*] I used to manage my own—in church mostly. I'd worry a loose one out in the long prayer. It was an awfully good time to do it.

GIRL. [*Laughing.*] I never thought of that.

HENRY. [*Proudly.*] I did most of mine then, and once I tried to put one in the plate—only my Aunt Henrietta, well—she has a way of interfering.

GIRL. [*Amused.*] I suppose you thought people would think it was a pearl of great price when they counted the collection?

HENRY. No, I didn't, I just thought it was a good way to save a dime!

GIRL. You were a mercenary child!

HENRY. No, just thrifty!

GIRL. [*Returning after pause to original subject.*] Have you ever taken gas before?

HENRY. [*Evasively.*] Well, no, I can't say I have.

GIRL. Neither have I and I don't know what it may do to me.

HENRY. They say people act queer when they're coming out.

GIRL. [*Nervously.*] Oh, I do hope I won't. Don't you think it's rather a dreadful feeling to think your mind's somewhere else for those minutes. It makes you feel so very blank somehow, and anything might happen to you—did you ever think of that?

HENRY. No, but my Aunt Henrietta has!

GIRL. Where do you suppose we'll be going in ten minutes?

HENRY. Well, not in opposite directions, I hope!

GIRL. [*Changing subject quickly.*] Now you tell me all about your tooth.

HENRY. [*Floundering.*] Oh, it's nothing—you see——

GIRL. Is yours a back one, too?

HENRY. Yes—— [*Confused.*] No, I mean——

GIRL. Oh, it's a front one! I'm sorry—that is, it's a pity because yours look so nice and strong.

HENRY. [*Blushing.*] Thanks, but I—well, I've never been asked to pose for a tooth paste ad.

GIRL. Neither have I, but I wouldn't have time to anyway, I'm so busy typewriting all day.

HENRY. [*With respectful interest.*] You don't say—that's more than I can do. Well, of course I pick letters out with two fingers sometimes, but it usually looks more like—like Norwegian when I get through!

GIRL. [*Wisely.*] That's because you hit the j's instead of the i's, I used to do that, too.

HENRY. I mean to learn some day, but I've got to learn to be a lawyer first.

GIRL. That's splendid. I was secretary for a lawyer last year.

HENRY. You were? Lucky for him!

GIRL. He didn't think so, he—he said I looked too immature——

HENRY. The hound! Why you're——

GIRL. [*Quickly.*] I even offered to wear shell glasses, but he said they wouldn't help any.

HENRY. I'm glad you didn't take to anything like that! He ought to be kicked, any lawyer that would say a thing like that to a girl like you—— [*Floundering for sufficiently effective language.*] Just tell me who he was?

GIRL. That's ever so good of you, but it wouldn't be professional etiquette, would it?

HENRY. I don't know that he showed much etiquette with you.

GIRL. [*Laughing.*] Well, but that wasn't professional etiquette.

HENRY. No, you bet it wasn't. [*Eagerly.*] Look here, you could tell me *your* name, couldn't you?

GIRL. [*Hesitating for a moment.*] Why, yes, I think so, as long as we're going to see each other through this pulling.

HENRY. And pretending we're related and everything. Mine's Hill—Henry Wellington Hill.

GIRL. And mine——

[*She is just about to speak when the* ATTENDANT *appears at the door and beckons to her. She rises and starts for the door; just as she is going in she gives* HENRY *a smile, disappearing quickly.* HENRY *stares after her, and as the door closes he makes a quick move towards it.* HENRY *gives vent to a sudden burst of feeling.*

ATTENDANT. If you'll step this way, Miss——

HENRY. Damn! Just when she was going to tell me her name!

[*At this moment the other door leading away from the dentist's room opens, and the attendant appears ushering in* Miss WELLINGTON.

Miss WELLINGTON. [*Radiantly.*] Henry! It's the most wonderful sensation! I'm all exhilarated!

HENRY. [*Absent-mindedly.*] That's too bad.

Miss WELLINGTON. But I tell you it was wonderful, Henry, wonderful! I feel all made over.

HENRY. [*Mechanically proffering her a chair.*] That's fine.

Miss WELLINGTON. [*Rapturously waving chair aside.*] I seemed to be climbing a mountain—Mount Olympus, I

think, or perhaps it was Mount Ararat, I always did get them mixed—and reasoning about the relative merits of Paganism versus Socialism.

HENRY. You don't say.

MISS WELLINGTON. Why, it's incredible; you'd never guess what deep thoughts you can have till you've taken gas. Henry, are you listening?

HENRY. [*Rousing himself from contemplation of the chair where the girl sat.*] Yes—Mount Washington, you said. By Jove, that's interesting.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Beginning to gather up things.*] No, I did *not* say Mount Washington, and you are *not* interested.

HENRY. [*Seeing her preparing to leave.*] You—you're not going yet?

MISS WELLINGTON. Why, of course I am! You don't suppose I'm planning to spend the morning here?

HENRY. [*Hastily.*] I think it's just as well to be careful, I mean——

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Suspiciously.*] That's just what I want to know—what do you mean? First I can hardly drag you here and now you won't go.

HENRY. But, you know, people do have relapses sometimes—they get faint or something.

MISS WELLINGTON. I do *not* feel faint, Henry, but I shall if I stay here much longer listening to you!

[HENRY *has been edging her towards the leather sofa, and now he urges her into it, though she stiffens and protests.*

HENRY. But you must lie down a few minutes, Aunt Henrietta, you really must—why everybody does—afterwards——

MISS WELLINGTON. I don't want to lie down, I tell you. I never felt better in all my life!

HENRY. That's just it—I couldn't think of letting you go out now. It's dangerous to feel that way.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*With spirit.*] Dangerous nothing! I ought to know whether I feel equal to leaving—and I do. [AUNT HENRIETTA *starts to rise.*]

HENRY. But you mustn't get up now, Aunt Henrietta.

[HENRY, *seating himself in the chair beside her in such a way that he keeps her from getting up from sofa. She sits on it stiffly and glares at him.*

HENRY. Here, let me fan you. That's what they always do to people, isn't it?

[*He seizes a magazine and creates such a wind that the papers begin to blow violently.*

MISS WELLINGTON. Stop, Henry, stop! You'll give me a chill, and I'll have pneumonia! Give me my things this minute.

[HENRY *is looking about despairingly when his eye lights on one of the magazines. He picks one up at random, and with another glance at the door through which the girl disappeared, begins to talk with feverish incoherence to gain time.*

HENRY. [*Glibly.*] Came across a very interesting article here, Aunt Henrietta, just in your line—all about —about spiritualism. Yes, and putting monkey bones in people. It's remarkable—they think in time the human race will climb trees and crack cocoanuts and everything —just like that—

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Trying to rise.*] Yes, I read all about that months ago, and the theory's been exploded.

HENRY. [*Earnestly.*] Oh, this is a new one—quite new.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*With a scornful glance.*] Cer-

tainly! The magazine is only eight months old. [*With exasperation.*] Henry Wellington Hill, you put that down, and take me down to the car this minute or I'll send you to be psycho-analyzed! You've always done queer things, but you've always been consistently queer up to now.

HENRY. [*Despairingly thrusts his hat on chair behind him, and pretends to be looking for it.*] But, Aunt Henrietta, how can I go without my hat? I don't see it anywhere. Some one must have carried it off by mistake while I was reading that article. [*Reproachfully.*] I was so absorbed thinking how it would help you.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Bouncing up with spirit.*] Help me? I'm not a monkey, and I don't want to learn to climb trees like one, and if you can't take care of your hat, you'll have to come home without it!

HENRY. [*Hastily.*] Oh, I couldn't do that!

MISS WELLINGTON. Yes, you could, the car's closed.

HENRY. It isn't that——

MISS WELLINGTON. No, and I haven't the faintest idea what it *is*—but this is the last time I ask you to do anything for me, and [*Darkly.*] I mean to change my will tomorrow. When my own nephew won't see me home after an extraction and keeps me here forcibly——

HENRY. Look here, Aunt Henrietta.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Interrupting him.*] You've either lost your mind and in that case you're not fit to have my money, or else you're intentionally cruel and have no right to it. [*She is on the verge of tears and* HENRY *is distracted. He pats her nervously on the shoulder.*]

HENRY. I didn't mean anything——

MISS WELLINGTON. No, you never do, you're just will-

fully inconsiderate, that's all. You'll never do anything I want you to. You won't even marry a nice girl.

HENRY. [*With another look towards the door.*] Hold on there, Aunt Henrietta, I haven't said absolutely I wouldn't. [*Absently.*] I might, you know, but—— [*Thoughtfully.*] I'd have to know her name, wouldn't I?

[MISS WELLINGTON *has gained the mirror by this time and is putting on her hat. But at this remark she wheels round on him sharply.*

MISS WELLINGTON. Know her name? A girl you were going to marry? Why you couldn't *know* her if you didn't know her name, and you couldn't marry her if you didn't know her!

HENRY. [*With a slow smile.*] Oh, I don't know— you might [*Inscrutably.*] if you know, you know.

MISS WELLINGTON. What *are* you talking about?

HENRY. I don't exactly know. [*Earnestly.*] Aunt Henrietta, when I came in here with you I didn't think much of anything, girls or teeth or dentists, but now it's just wonderful how a dentist's waiting room can make you feel, and I'll come here again with you any time——

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Now genuinely alarmed.*] Henry, you're sick, I knew something was wrong the way you talked. [*Taking his arm.*] Come now, we'll get right out in the air and you'll feel better.

HENRY. But I don't want to feel any better—I feel— [*Firmly.*] I've got to stay here.

MISS WELLINGTON. Dear, dear, I might have known something like this would happen! I bring you here to look after me and then I have to take care of you. [*Peering at him searchingly.*] Henry, if you were any one else I'd say you'd been drinking or else you were in love!

[*Here there is a sound at the door and* HENRY

pricks up his ears. It opens and the girl and the nurse appear.

ATTENDANT. [*With a pad and pencil.*] Yes, I have your name, Miss Pearson, Dr. Smith will telephone your dentist about the treatments.

GIRL. Yes. [*Seeing* HENRY.] Oh, you haven't gone in yet. I'm so glad for I wanted to wish you luck.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Turning in surprise.*] Why, it's Miss Pearson!

GIRL. [*Also surprised.*] Miss Wellington! I hadn't any idea *you* were here!

MISS WELLINGTON. I wish you'd told me you were coming to Dr. Smith, it would have saved my bringing Henry. [*She turns about to introduce them.*] This is—

HENRY. [*Cutting in quickly.*] Oh, but you see, we know all about each other.

GIRL. [*Simply.*] Yes, and he was so brave and didn't make anything of coming here at all.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Sharply.*] Why should he, I'd like to know? [*To* HENRY.] And why didn't you say you knew Miss Pearson when I told you she was going to be my secretary?

HENRY. [*Brightening visibly.*] Of course, if I'd had any idea you meant *this* Miss Pearson——

GIRL. [*Incredulously looking from Aunt to Nephew.*] And you're Miss Wellington's nephew—Why—Why——

HENRY. [*Low.*] I hope you don't mind?

GIRL. [*Shyly.*] Oh, no, only it's so surprising.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Cutting in on this little tete-a-tete.*] Well, who'd have thought of our meeting here in a dentist's parlor?

GIRL. And I was dreading coming so!

HENRY. [*Solicitously.*] Oh—I forgot to ask you—

did it hurt a lot? How do you feel? Don't you think you'd better lie down and rest awhile?

GIRL. [*Smiling as she confesses.*] Why no, you see, Dr. Smith didn't think the tooth needed to come out after all.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Grimly.*] Well, I'm certainly glad to hear they sometimes miss a chance to pull!

GIRL. There was some mistake about it you see——

HENRY. [*Earnestly.*] No, there wasn't any mistake, it was just Providence—everything, I mean—us and it and here!

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Hearing the end of this spech and approaching* HENRY *with a knowing smile.*] Well, Henry, I think we might go now, and take Miss Pearson back with us in the car.

HENRY. That's what I was thinking too.

GIRL. But—but your tooth, Mr. Hill? You didn't have it out?

HENRY. [*Quickly.*] Oh, that's all right too, it's a long story. I can tell you at lunch—for you're going to have lunch with us, you know.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*To* GIRL.] Henry never has a bit of trouble with his teeth. That's why he's so unsympathetic when other people have.

GIRL. [*On the defensive.*] But I think he's *very* sympathetic.

MISS WELLINGTON. [*Drily.*] I suppose that depends on who happens to need sympathy!

GIRL. [*To* HENRY.] I don't understand—about it all yet——

HENRY. [*Happily.*] Neither do I, but it doesn't seem to matter when you feel like this.

CURTAIN

THEORIES AND THUMBS

A FANTASY FOR MUSEUMS

CHARACTERS

ANNIE MORRISON, *who possesses both heart and imagination*

MRS. DONOVAN, *who possesses the heart only*

MISS MARSHALL, *of the Museum*

THE PRINCESS, *also of the Museum, formerly of Egypt*

A GIRL

ANOTHER GIRL

All acting rights, both professional and amateur, are reserved in the United States, Great Britain, and all countries of the copyright union, by the owner. Application for the right of performing this play or reading it in public should be made to Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. Moving Picture rights reserved.

Attention is called to the penalties provided by law for any infringements of the dramatist's rights, as follows:

"Sec. 4966:—Any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition for which copyright has been obtained, without the consent of the proprietor of said dramatic or musical composition, or his heirs and assigns, shall be liable for damages therefor, such damages in all cases to be assessed at such sum, not less than one hundred dollars for the first and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance, as to the court shall appear to be just. If the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, such person or persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year."—U. S. Revised Statutes, Title 60, Chap. 3.

THEORIES AND THUMBS

A Fantasy for Museums

SCENE: *A corner of the Egyptian room in a city museum. There is a door left leading into a corridor and nearby a bench of the sort designed for bored attendants or the weary public. A glass case stands at the right, giving the effect of others stretching on down a long room beyond. In the back center of the stage, on a raised platform, and roped off from the fingers of curious visitors, is a small statue. The figure is about three or three and a half feet high and represents a little girl of ancient Egypt. It is remarkably life-like, the features carved and colored, the body clothed in, or rather painted to represent, rich robes and jewels. The small hands and arms, covered with rings and bracelets, are crossed over the breast in a conventional pose, and the face is done in the usual Egyptian style, with very staring eyes, dark eyebrows and heavy dark hair, bound across the forehead with a golden band, but falling in bushy masses on either side of the face.*

When the curtain rises, two high school girls, of the flapper variety, are strolling by. They pause by the statue, giggling as they read aloud the inscription on the placard. As they do so, another figure enters behind them. This is Annie Morrison, *a nondescript as to age and looks. She is in an apron and working clothes and her hair is stringy from her recent exer-*

tions with her mop and pail. These she carries and sets down near the door. Ostensibly she is beginning to scrub the floor, but the audience can see clearly that she is listening to the girls' words and her eyes are fixed on the little Egyptian figure with a curious intensity.

First Girl. [*Reading.*] 'Statue from the tomb of a little girl, probably a princess of the reigning house. Date unknown, but attributed to the fourth dynasty.' Say, what do you know about that—it was a kid! Ever see such a get up?

Second Girl. Her rig's nothin' to her face! If that's what you had to look like in the fourth dynasty I'm glad we didn't get let into it!

First Girl. [*Pulling her away.*] Aw, come on, I'm fed up with this stuff. That gong to clear out rang fifteen minutes ago. We got enough for classwork tomorrow.

Second Girl. [*Noticing* Annie *at work.*] Guess we'd better be movin', they're startin' to clean up. [*With another look at the statue.*] Wouldn't mind borrowin' that swell bracelet of hers for the dance tonight——

First Girl. 'Tis kind of cute with that snake's head clasp. [*As they move away.*] What you goin' to wear tonight?

[*Girls exeunt giggling, and* Annie *stares after them vindictively. Then she gives a quick look all about to see if anyone is in sight before she moves over to the statue, leaning as close to it as the rope will permit. She speaks to it with a sort of fierce protectiveness.*

Annie. Don't you listen to a word they say! You're just as good lookin' as they are and your jewelry's a lot handsomer. [*A pause.*] It's fierce when folks laugh at

you—act just as if we had the choosin' of our own faces! [*Leaning forward and studying the dress minutely.*] I couldn't hardly sleep last night for thinkin' about you an' if you're dressed warm enough underneath. I wisht I knew. I wouldn't want you to catch cold, with so much goin' round.

[*Here footsteps sound and* ANNIE *goes at the floor again hurriedly, as* MISS MARSHALL, *a pleasant, scholarly young woman, enters in her street things. She smiles at* ANNIE, *who looks up from her work.*

MISS MARSHALL. [*With easy friendliness.*] Well, Annie, if I'm late leaving I always know I'll find you in this room.

ANNIE. Yes'm, I always do the big room first. I like to save this for the last.

MISS MARSHALL. You ought to be out doing your Christmas shopping.

ANNIE. Well, there's been years I've hated to see the twenty fifth o' December ahead o' me on the calendar, what with havin' no folks and all, but I don't feel like that so much [*With a shy glance at the statue*] now that I work here.

MISS MARSHALL. [*Interested.*] You like working in a museum?

ANNIE. It kind of gives you a lot to think about—all these folks and their belongings!

MISS MARSHALL. Why, I didn't know you cared about them, Annie. Of course I do, but I've studied them.

ANNIE. I know you're always readin' or writing about them. Did you get that paper done? The one you said would get you them letters added to your name, like a doctor.

MISS MARSHALL. [*Smiling.*] Not a real doctor, you know, not a doctor of medicine at least.

ANNIE. [*Inspired.*] I know—a—a doctor of meditation!

MISS MARSHALL. [*Laughs.*] Well, whether it makes me that or not, the paper's all done! [*She taps a notebook she carries.*]

ANNIE. You haven't found out nothin' more 'bout her, have you? [*She jerks her head towards statue.*]

MISS MARSHALL. [*Following her glance.*] Oh, yes, I remember you asked me about that once—no, it's just another one of those unidentified statues from some old tomb that was broken into and the images scattered. Nothing very unusual about it except that it's the only one of a child they have here.

ANNIE. [*Eagerly.*] But seem's to me that makes a heap o' difference.

MISS MARSHALL. [*Thoughtfully, studying it.*] Probably a Ka * statue, though they weren't usually so large.

ANNIE. [*Puzzled.*] Excuse me, Miss Marshall, but what made you call her that for—a car?

MISS MARSHALL. Why you see when people died they always had images put in their tombs.

ANNIE. [*Interrupting.*] To keep them company?

MISS MARSHALL. [*Amused.*] Something like that. Ka statues they called them and the richer the people were the more they had put in their tombs with the mummy. They believed that after it was sealed up the soul of the deceased could come out and go into the Ka to live. That's why they made them look as much like the mummy as they could and dressed them so beautifully——

ANNIE. [*Pleased.*] Those are her best clothes then?

MISS MARSHALL. I suppose so. [*Continuing her sub-*

* Pronounced "car."

ject.] Often those old tombs would be filled with little images—Kas of slaves, too, and even of pet animals—cats and dogs and birds, so the one who had died could go right on having just as pleasant a time as before.

ANNIE. Do you think she had lots to play with her?

MISS MARSHALL. Very likely if she was a princess as they think, but no one knows, the tomb was broken when they found this.

ANNIE. And she was all alone. My, how lonesome she must be—I knew there was somethin' wrong the way her eyes look at you.

MISS MARSHALL. It's a wonder she wasn't broken, too, but I'm glad for I needed her for my report.

ANNIE. Did you put her in it—honest? I hope you said nice things. Sometimes people say real mean things about her looks and I get awful mad.

MISS MARSHALL. I only used her to illustrate some theories of mine. [*Warming to her subject.*] I'm trying to prove that she belonged to a later dynasty, and then there must be some reason for her wearing that decoration on the front of her robe instead of at the shoulder. All the others wear it higher up, but this is halfway down the dress.

ANNIE. [*Coming close.*] Do you mean that little gold trimmin' there?

MISS MARSHALL. Yes, you can see it doesn't fasten anything or fit in with the design. If I could only prove——

ANNIE. [*Breaking in eagerly.*] Why, Miss Marshall, don't you know you can't prove nothin' by children's clothes. They're just as likely to put 'em on hind side to and never know the difference!

MISS MARSHALL. [*Firmly.*] They had reasons for everything then. [*Baffled as she looks at it.*] Of course it might have had something to do with religion. There

was one sign a little like this that stood for the worship of Horus, but it isn't likely anyone but a priest would have worn it. If we could only know.

ANNIE. There's a heap I'd like to know—how old she is now. What would you say?

MISS MARSHALL. [*Absently.*] Why I never thought about it much—ten perhaps—they were a small race.

ANNIE. [*Emphatically.*] Not on your life she ain't ten!

MISS MARSHALL. [*Smiling.*] You seem very sure.

ANNIE. I am.

MISS MARSHALL. There's no way of being certain without an inscription.

ANNIE. Her thumb's all the inscription I need.

MISS MARSHALL Her thumb—what do you mean?

ANNIE. [*Triumphant.*] Can't you see how flat it is?

MISS MARSHALL. [*Examining it.*] Why, yes, it is a little, but I don't see——

ANNIE. It's flat 'cause she sucks it. Most young ones do till they're six or seven when their ma's and nurses break 'em of it. [*Fondly.*] There's nothin' so comfortin' to kids as a thumb, specially in the dark.

MISS MARSHALL. [*Smiling.*] Well, Annie, if I stay here any longer you'll be telling me next that King Khafra used an ear trumpet or something just as impossible.

ANNIE. Maybe he did, Miss Marshall. Those folks must of been a lot like us—the women folks were anyhow. [*She points to the glass case nearby.*] Take that baby dress in there. The stitches are put in just as fine as can be. I bet that mother made it all herself, and I get to wondering if 'twas a boy or a girl baby. I kind of think it was a boy. The sleeve's torn in one place and you know boy babies are dreadful hard on their clothes.

[*She sighs a little to herself.*] My, aren't there just lots o' things you'd like to know about them?

MISS MARSHALL. There certainly are—I'd like to know if the pyramid of Sakkark really was the tomb of Tosiri, and if——

ANNIE. [*Eagerly breaking in.*] O, my, I'd rather know how they got along without rockin' chairs and soap and safety pins and—and all the comforts o' home!

MISS MARSHALL. Well, I'm afraid we'll never know. [*She turns to leave.*]

ANNIE. You're awful learned, Miss Marshall, but I think you're all off 'bout that gold thing on her dress. You can't prove nothin' from children.

MISS MARSHALL. [*From the door.*] How in the world do you come to know so much about them, Annie?

ANNIE. Watchin' other folks, and— [*With a shy look at the statue*] and her.

MISS MARSHALL. But that's so different from a live one today.

ANNIE. [*Simply.*] I don't believe they're so different, Miss Marshall.

MISS MARSHALL. Well, I mustn't keep you from your work—good night. [*Exit* MISS MARSHALL.]

ANNIE. [*Staring after her.*] Good night. [*To the statue again.*] Did you hear what she said 'bout puttin' you in a paper? Now don't you feel set up?

[*She continues her work and another scrubwoman enters presently. This is* MRS. DONOVAN, *a motherly soul of majestic proportions, with a garrulous tongue that still rolls a bit of the brogue about in moments of excitement. She is putting on her hat and coat.*

MRS. DONOVAN. Well, how much longer you goin' to keep at it, Annie Morrison? This ain't a night shift!

ANNIE. Lots of people stayed late and got in my way, and then I got to thinkin'——

MRS. DONOVAN. Thinkin' don't do you no good, Annie, my girl. You'll get left here one of these nights, an' find yourself locked in. You could easy with that new watchman, he's deaf's a post, an' anybody could holler in here for hours an' nobody know!

ANNIE. Wouldn't they, I wonder?

MRS. DONOVAN. An' 'twould be no joke either off here in this wing with all these indecent stiffs layin' round!

ANNIE. [*Quickly.*] Oh, Mrs. Donovan, don't you call them no names.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*Emphatically.*] That's what they are, ain't they—indecent stiffs.

ANNIE. [*Earnestly.*] They can't help it if they haven't got enough clothes on. I get feelin' real sorry for 'em some o' these cold nights. I think the Board had ought to provide blankets.

MRS. DONOVAN. Are you clean crazy? Whatever do you mean by that? [*Sharply.*] You haven't took up with any good for nothing man, have you?

ANNIE. [*Hastily.*] No, nothin' like that.

MRS. DONOVAN. No, you ain't the sort that picks 'em up easy, but somethin's struck you hard all right. You ain't the same girl you was when you come here three months ago, an' I don't wonder—these here coffins an' corpses an' ugly little heathen images! What are they doin' in a Christian country, that's what I want to know?

ANNIE. It ain't their fault if folks bring 'em here.

MRS. DONOVAN. You're not the first I've seen get queer in this old museum, an' I've caught you moonin' round lots o' times lately when you didn't know I was watchin'.

ANNIE. There's no harm in lookin' round.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*Sarcastically.*] An' who was you

expectin' to see? Maybe old Rameses himself walkin' out o' his coffin?

ANNIE. [*Nervously.*] I wouldn't say things like that if I was you—it's takin' a chance.

MRS. DONOVAN. Of what, I'd like to know?

ANNIE. They might hear you an' think 'twas disrespectful. Those old kings was awful strong on respect, specially that Rameses, still he don't interest me like some do.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*Starting suddenly.*] Well, now if I didn't most forget to tell you what I came for. Ain't that me all over wastin' good talk on this stuff when I've got real news for you!

ANNIE. [*Continuing with her work.*] What is it, Mrs. Donovan?

MRS. DONOVAN. You know the swell place I go Sundays, where my sister works? [ANNIE *nods.*] Well, they're movin' out to the country next week, they've been buildin' a grand house with every contrivance to help an' hinder you with your work an' rooms an' rooms an' baths enough for the whole o' my tenement to be takin' 'em at once, if they ever did—Anyhow they want a nurse for the kids.

ANNIE. How many?

MRS. DONOVAN. Two little girls. The work's easy if you like kids an' the country, an' you do, don't you?

ANNIE. [*Eagerly.*] Oh, yes, specially little girls.

MRS. DONOVAN. That's what I told my sister. I says to her last night, I know just the girl for you, an she told the lady an' you're to go see her tonight after you get through here. Here's where it is. [*She hands* ANNIE *a slip of paper.*] There won't be no fuss about the pay if she likes you. The country 'll do you good, Annie, this ain't no place for a girl like you.

ANNIE. [*Slowly.*] It's so long since I seen the country I get pains in my mind thinkin' how it's there an' I'm here. 'Twould be nice smellin' grass an' flowers an' hearin' birds in the mornin' stead of ash cans and cars, and I'd love scrubbin' children stead of floors.

MRS. DONOVAN. You go right over tonight. Come on with me now, I brought your things with mine. [*She holds* ANNIE'S *coat and hat and a package which she feels of curiously.*] Whatever you got here?

ANNIE. [*Guiltily.*] Nothin'—nothin' in particular, I mean.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*Still feeling of it.*] Queer how lumpy it is! If I didn't know better I'd say 'twas a doll!

ANNIE. [*Fearfully.*] Look out, you might break it.

MRS. DONOVAN. Oh, it's breakable, is it?

ANNIE. It's a Christmas present for somebody.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*Still unsatisfied, looking at the wrapping paper.*] Funny you're buyin' it over to Steinfeld's toy store. My Sadie was crazy after a doll she saw in the window. Well, are you comin' now?

ANNIE. [*Evasively*] I got some more to do on this floor.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*Turning away, putting* ANNIE'S *things on the bench.*] Well, it ain't none o' my business if you want to spend your days an' nights here! We got that room full o' Chinese idols to do tomorrow mornin' 'fore ten when the doors open.

ANNIE. I know, I'll be here early.

MRS. DONOVAN. Don't you lose that address an' be sure an' tell me what she says tomorrow.

ANNIE. I will. It was kind of you to think o' me, Mrs. Donovan. Good night.

MRS. DONOVAN. Always glad to do a good turn for anybody. Good night.

[*She goes out, and as soon as* ANNIE *is sure she is out of sight, she puts down her mop and pail. Seating herself on the bench she begins to unwrap the package, unfolding from the paper a doll, of the cheap but effectively dressed sort, with a resplendent blond wig.* ANNIE *holds it out for the Egyptian Princess to admire.*

ANNIE. What do you think of that, now? Catch me lettin' that Sadie Donovan get her first. [*There comes a sound of heavy footsteps off stage from the corridor.* ANNIE *listens knowingly and as if she were a little frightened.*] He's lockin' up early tonight. Thinks we've all gone, I guess. [*Suddenly the lights are switched off, leaving the place in darkness.* ANNIE'S *voice continues out of the blackness.*] My, it's black. [*There is the sound* of a key and then the footsteps grow fainter.] Well, I'm in for a night of it, all right, but I said I'd do it and Annie Morrison ain't the girl to break her word.

[*There is a brief interval of darkness to indicate the lapse of an hour or so, (and also to give time for the statue to be removed and a real child substituted). Before the lights come on again a child's shrill and terrified crying sounds. Then the lights come on gradually, revealing* ANNIE, *curled up and dozing on the bench, while seated on the little platform where the statue stood is a little girl, somewhere between six and eight, the exact replica of the image except that she is unmistakably real. Her crying dies down to a scared whimper and presently her thumb is in her mouth and she is sucking it hard.* ANNIE *stirs uneasily and rubs her eyes. Throughout the following scene the child should be played as a real little girl despite her quaint and archaic*

manner of speech, and her long robes, heavily embroidered.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Wailing.*] Ameny—I do not like this place. It is cold and I am afraid, Ameny—Zura, where are you? I am afraid——

ANNIE. [*Rousing herself suddenly.*] Course you are, dearie, but I'm right here. Annie wouldn't let nothin' hurt you. [*She is sitting up excitedly now, but triumphantly as if she felt no great surprise.*]

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Still crying, hardly noticing* ANNIE.] I want my tomb—and I want Ameny.

ANNIE. Wouldn't I do? [*Smiling to herself as she notices the child's thumb.*] There, I told Miss Marshall you sucked it!

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Timidly.*] You are not angry with me?

ANNIE. No, I ain't, though I 'spose I'd ought to start breakin' you of it. [*She rises and holds out her arms eagerly to the child.*] Come here.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Drawing back, haughtily.*] I did not summon you. [*Presently she begins to shiver miserably.*] Coldness has fallen upon me.

ANNIE. [*Sympathetically.*] And I don't wonder in that cotton dress. Flannels is what you need, darlin', but I could warm you if you'd sit up close to me.

[LITTLE PRINCESS *hesitates, but finally goes to her slowly.*

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Studying her.*] Are you the one who smiles upon me?

ANNIE. What do you mean by that?

LITTLE PRINCESS. There is one who smiles at me sometimes, even in this place.

ANNIE. [*Pleased.*] That's me, all right. I kind of thought you noticed even if you didn't dare to let on.

[*She puts her arm timidly about the child and draws her closer, slipping her coat over the thin Egyptian dress.*] Tell me, now, who's this here Ameny you was callin' for?

LITTLE PRINCESS. Ameny is my nurse and they have taken me away from her, a long, long way across the water. [*Wearily.*] I am very tired of this place.

ANNIE. I don't wonder, poor lamb!

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Looking up at her wonderingly.*] Whose slave are you?

ANNIE. [*Indignantly.*] I'm not any slave, this is a free country.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Proudly.*] The King, my father, had thousands of slaves and I had fifty all my own.

ANNIE. [*Aghast.*] You did? What would one little girl like you want of fifty slaves?

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Explaining carefully.*] It is necessary for a princess to have many slaves—to bring me scented water to bathe in, to put on my robes and dress my hair, and fasten my sandals and serve my food—and then the musicians to sing when I would sleep, and the fan bearers to cool me.

ANNIE. [*Hugging her and smiling.*] Well, you don't need no fan bearers in this place, do you?

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Shaking her head.*] No.

ANNIE. I call that an awful waste, havin' so many slaves when I could do all those things for you myself.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Sighing.*] It is very lonely with no slaves; even the merchants' daughters had each five slaves. [*She is almost in tears again.*]

ANNIE. [*Quickly.*] Now, now, don't you do that. You'll just have to get used to bein' in a country where there's a servant problem. Don't you feel so bad.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Persistently.*] I have need of Ameny.

ANNIE. [*Persuasively.*] I guess you'll have to take me instead, dearie—my name's Annie, that's most the same.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Pronouncing it slowly after her.*] Ah-nee. What does that mean?

ANNIE. Why, I don't know as it means anything.

LITTLE PRINCESS. I was named for a golden lotus flower.

ANNIE. I've heard tell of 'em but I never see any in these parts.

LITTLE PRINCESS. I do not like a country where there are no lotus flowers floating in the water on their flat green leaves.

ANNIE. [*Brightening.*] Oh, you mean pond lilies.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Frowning.*] I do not like this place, Ah-nee, I am very unhappy.

ANNIE. [*Soothingly.*] I know it ain't no joke stayin' cooped up all day with folks passin' mean remarks on your looks.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Angrily.*] They are wicked people, and I will tell the King, my father, to have them thrown into the Nile to be eaten by the crocodiles.

ANNIE. [*Shocked.*] Oh, no, darlin', you mustn't do that! They don't mean no harm really.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Fiercely.*] They laughed at me, and I am a Princess. That is enough! They have dared to laugh at my hair and my robes and my jewels. [*She holds out her arm with all its bracelets.*] These people are pigs and I have prayed to Horus to smite them.

ANNIE. [*Gently.*] You see, they don't any of 'em know you like I do, even Miss Marshall don't, if she did put you in her paper. [*Suddenly recalling the earlier conversation and touching the decoration on the child's dress.*] Say, tell me what makes you wear that gold thing half way down your skirt?

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Fondling it.*] If it were high up on my shoulder I could not see it and it is good to watch the sun shine on the gold. I ordered my slaves to sew it here so I may watch it glitter and not make weary my neck with twistings.

ANNIE. Well, of all things! [*Nodding to herself.*] Didn't I tell her you couldn't prove a thing by children's clothes? What's it for anyway?

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Puzzled.*] What should it be for but to look beautiful on my dress?

ANNIE. It's as good a reason as any, I guess. Of course I never went in much for jewelry myself.

LITTLE PRINCESS. Why have you no bracelets, and where is your wig?

ANNIE. My wig? I haven't took to one yet!

LITTLE PRINCESS. The Queen, my mother, had many wigs, and if I had lived to be fifteen years old, I, too, would have worn one—a blue wig.

ANNIE. Good night!

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Explaining.*] Only Princesses may wear blue wigs.

ANNIE. Then I'm glad you died young! [*Hastily catching herself up.*] Oh, I don't mean that like it sounds. [*Very tenderly.*] Was it—was it lonesome bein' dead an' in a tomb?

LITTLE PRINCESS. Oh, no, my tomb was spacious with pictures on the walls and golden dishes, and Ameny and all my slaves were with me. Every evening the priests came to say prayers by the door and to bring offerings. We could hear them and the wind in the palm trees and the boatmen calling to one another out on the river.

ANNIE. Pleasant life all right.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Wistfully.*] Why did they take me away from my nice tomb?

ANNIE. Don't ask me, I'd take you back if I could, but don't you cry anymore for those slaves—you've got me now.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Snuggling closer to her.*] You will not go away too, Ah-nee?

ANNIE. [*With fervor.*] Bless your heart, no! [*Then remembering.*] Leastways I'll come sometimes on my afternoon off.

LITTLE PRINCESS. Every day you will come?

ANNIE. [*Worried.*] I don't see how I can if I go to the country. I'm goin' to miss seein' you and just when we've got acquainted, too.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Beginning to cry again.*] Oh, you are going away too—you will leave me all alone again.

ANNIE. But I wouldn't dare stay nights with you and you can't talk to me with folks around.

LITTLE PRINCESS. But I should know that you were here. You would come and smile upon me and I should not mind what those others said.

ANNIE. [*Hugging her.*] Nobody cared before whether they had me around or not.

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Gravely.*] I do, Ah-nee.

ANNIE. Well, I 'spose if you can stay here missin' the river and trees and them lotus flowers, I'd ought to be willin' to get along without the country, too, only——

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Eagerly.*] Then you are not going away?

ANNIE. [*Slowly.*] I'm in a fix for sure. Here you are needin' me, an' I can't take you away.

LITTLE PRINCESS. I shall watch for you every day.

ANNIE. I'd hate to think o' that and me not showin' up.

LITTLE PRINCESS. Swear by Horus that you will not go away.

ANNIE. No, I won't do no swearin' for nobody, not even for you! [*The child looks so disappointed, she gives in suddenly.*] But I tell you what I'll do, I'll promise you cross my heart and hope to die, I won't go. That lady can get someone else to take care of her kids. It's the ashcans and fifth floor tenement for me, but I don't care!

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Seriously.*] The Gods will bless you.

ANNIE. I'm not stayin' for any blessin'!

LITTLE PRINCESS. [*Generously.*] And you shall have my best bracelet with the emeralds.

ANNIE. No, no, what would I do with it? Besides they'd be sure to miss it and land me in jail. [*Gently.*] I guess we kind of needed each other. [*Timidly.*] Do you think the King, your father, would mind if I was to kiss you? [*The* LITTLE PRINCESS *lifts up her face and* ANNIE *kisses it half fearfully.*]

LITTLE PRINCESS. It is sweet to kiss—I had forgotten.

ANNIE. I can throw you one every day soon's I get here, and I'll leave the doll with my pail and mop in the closet off the hall over there. [*Pointing towards the corridor.*] Gracious I forgot to give her to you, and I bought her on purpose. [*She brings it out with pride.*] I bet she's prettier'n any you ever had before. I don't think so much of those old wooden ones in the cases. There, you can hold her and look, her eyes shut when you lay her down. And say, talk about eyes, it's awful late for you to be up and wide awake. [*She gathers the child and doll into her lap.*] There's plenty of room in my lap for the two of you. Now you shut your eyes, too.

LITTLE PRINCESS. Ameny would always rock me in her arms.

ANNIE. So—that's how they got along without rockin' chairs. Well, I guess I can too!

[*She begins to rock her contentedly and presently darkness comes again. Again a lapse of time and when it grows light a clock is striking eight. The Egyptian room shows cold and cheerless in morning light. The little statue is back in its place and Annie is waking stiff and uncomfortable from a corner of the bench where she has been curled up. The doll has slipped to the floor beside it.*

ANNIE. [*Stretching.*] Gee, I'm a stiff myself. My feet feel like they was a mile away from the rest of me! [*Looking up at the* PRINCESS'S *figure.*] Say, how'd you get back without wakin' me? I'll just go put these back 'fore anyone sees me.

[*She gathers up her things and goes out stiffly. As she reaches the door to the corridor,* MRS. DONOVAN *appears in it. Each starts at sight of the other.* ANNIE *hastily covers the doll with her coat, and tries to look unconcerned.*

MRS. DONOVAN. Holy Saints, Annie Morrison, don't you ever leave this place? You're here when I go home and you're here when I come to work in the mornin'! Anybody'd think you'd stayed here all night!

ANNIE. [*With a nervous laugh.*] It sure does look that way.

MRS. DONOVAN. I thought I'd beat you for once, but it ain't no use I guess. [*With sudden meaning.*] But I can tell what you're up to, you want to get through early so's you can leave for good—tell me, now, did you get the place?

ANNIE. No, I—I didn't go to see the lady.

MRS. DONOVAN. In heaven's name why not?

ANNIE. [*Turning away to evade the other's eyes.*] Oh, I've been thinkin' about it, and I—I changed my mind, that's all.

MRS. DONOVAN. Why you was crazy to go last night.

ANNIE. I know the country's grand, but I'd miss it here. No, I'm goin' to stay on.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*With disgust.*] You've certainly lost your senses. Places like that one ain't so easy to pick up!

ANNIE. [*Firmly.*] Here's where I stay.

MRS. DONOVAN. [*Dismissing the case with a shrug.*] Well, if you want to die on your knees swashin' soap an' water over dirty floors 'stead of in a decent bed with folks to take care o' you, it's nothing to me, but I must say you're all kinds of a fool, Annie Morrison!

ANNIE. [*Giving the little statue a stealthy smile.*] Maybe I am—but—it's kind of a nice feelin'!

CURTAIN